

MODERN CREMATION

ITS HISTORY AND PRACTICE

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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DIET IN RELATION TO AGE  
AND ACTIVITY.

BY  
SIR HENRY THOMPSON.

NINTH THOUSAND.

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LONDON: KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & Co., LTD.,

# MODERN CREMATION

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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*Price One Shilling.*

CREMATION :

THE TREATMENT OF THE BODY AFTER DEATH.

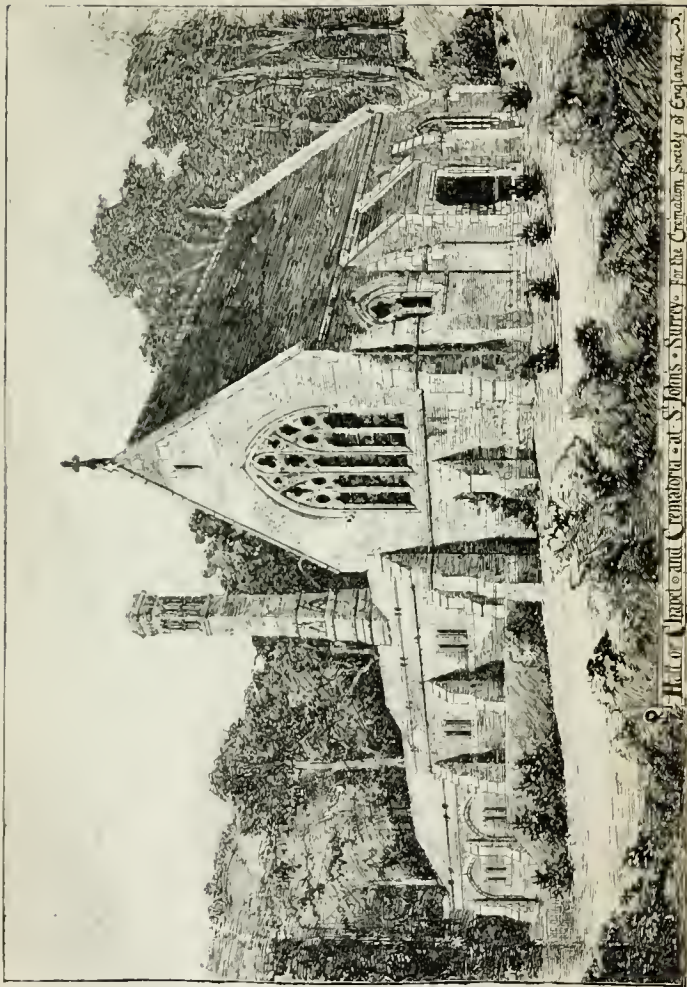
THIRD EDITION.

TOGETHER WITH A PAPER BY SIR T. SPENCER WELLS, BART.,  
AND  
THE CHARGE BY SIR JAMES STEPHEN, ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

LONDON : SMITH, ELDER & CO.







St. John's Church and Crematorium at St. John's • Surrey • For the Cremation Society of England.

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# MODERN CREMATION

*ITS HISTORY AND PRACTICE*

WITH  
INFORMATION RELATING TO THE RECENTLY  
IMPROVED ARRANGEMENTS MADE BY  
THE CREMATION SOCIETY  
OF ENGLAND

BY  
SIR H. THOMPSON, F.R.C.S., M.B. LOND., ETC.  
PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

SECOND EDITION  
*REVISED AND GREATLY ENLARGED*

LONDON  
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD.

1891

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## P R E F A C E .



A SECOND edition of "Modern Cremation" being required, I have remodelled and enlarged the work, issuing it in a form designed to place it within the reach of all who care to be acquainted with the subject.

I republish therewith my earliest writings on the subject, which appeared seventeen years ago, as the facts there adduced, and the arguments based upon them, are in no respect changed since that time. Moreover, I learn, from the numerous applicants who write me for information, that it is still as necessary as ever to explain the sanitary laws which must inevitably render cremation (or some method of disposing of the dead other than burial) sooner or later most desirable, if not necessary, in a country so densely populated as our own. By means of this and other additions, I hope to render the

present edition a more complete epitome of the subject than the original work was designed to be.

The work is divided into four parts.

The FIRST PART consists of a brief historical sketch of the rise and progress of modern cremation in England, with reference also to the development of the system on the Continent.

The SECOND PART contains the earliest writings referred to above, without any change from the original form in which they appeared.

The THIRD PART considers and discusses the chief objection still urged against cremation, viz. that founded on the possibility of destroying by its action, traces of poison in the body cremated. The appointment of an inspector to examine and certify to the cause of death in every case, whether designed for burial or cremation, is strongly advocated, following the precedents of France and other continental states. And the conditions are formulated by which the practice of cremation should in future be regulated. The organization of the Cremation Society ; the list of its officers, its objects ; the requirements and directions necessary to be known by those who desire to employ cremation, are fully set forth.

The FOURTH PART explains the system adopted for the purpose of inspecting the dead body, of obtaining evidence as to the cause, before certifying, together with copies of all instructions and schedules employed,—in every case of death throughout France.

HENRY THOMPSON.

35, WIMPOLE STREET, LONDON,

*April, 1891.*





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# MODERN CREMATION.

## PART I.

### HISTORICAL SKETCH OF MODERN CREMATION IN ENGLAND.

THE brief historical outline which I design to make of the rise and progress of cremation in England during the last seventeen years, reckoning from the commencement of 1874, will be incomplete without an allusion to what the modern reaction in favour of cremation had achieved on the continent shortly before the date named. The proposal to adopt it in recent times originally proceeded mainly from Italy. Papers and monographs appeared commending the method as early as 1866, but practical experimenters, Gorini and Polli, published separately the results of their experiments in 1872; and among others, Professor Brunetti, of Padua, in 1873 detailed his experience, exhibiting the results of it in the form of ashes, etc., with a model of his furnace, at the Great Exhibition at Vienna of that year.

*History of cremation movement during last twenty years.*

*Practical experiments commenced in Italy.*

*Results shown at the Vienna Exhibition, 1873.*

I first became practically acquainted with the subject on seeing his collection there, and studied it with great interest. I had long believed that cremation was in theory the quickest and safest mode of reducing the dead body to its original elements—the end attained slowly, and not without danger to the living, by burial in earth. But I now satisfied myself for the first time that, if not by this apparatus, yet by some other, complete and inoffensive combustion of the body might almost certainly be effected without difficulty. Brunetti's first cremation took place in 1869, his second and third in 1870, and were performed in an open furnace out of doors. The results were effectively displayed and illustrated by written descriptions, plans, and drawings.

*Brunetti.*

In no other European country had any act of human cremation taken place, as far as I can learn, prior to 1874; and very little notice or information respecting it appeared in any literary form. Dr. de Pietra Santa, the well-known sanitary authority of Paris, reported the Italian cases in a little brochure on the subject in 1873, according his hearty support to the practice. But in the autumn of 1874 there appears to have been a solitary example at Breslau; while another occurred almost immediately afterwards at Dresden, where an English lady was cremated in a Siemens' apparatus by the agency of gas.

*Dr. Pietra  
de Santa,  
Paris.*

*Breslau and  
Dresden.*

No repetition of the process has taken place there since.

Being thoroughly convinced of the value of the method as a sanitary reform, at once pressing and important, I ventured to bring the subject before the English public for the first time, by writing an article which appeared in the *Contemporary Review* in January, 1874, entitled "Cremation: the Treatment of the Body after Death." And I advocated the plan there set forth, based on the Italian trials referred to, and further illustrated by several experimental cremations made by myself in powerful furnaces, on animals, both in London and Birmingham, at the same date. On the results thus obtained, I felt justified in asserting the superiority of a complete cremation at all events, to any method by burial in the soil.\* The reason assigned for taking this step was my belief, supported by a striking array of facts, that cremation was becoming a necessary sanitary precaution against the propagation of disease among a population rapidly increasing, and daily growing larger in relation to the area it occupies.

The degree of attention which this proposal aroused was remarkable, not only here, but abroad, the paper being translated into several European languages. In the course of the first

\* See Part II., pp. 87-90 for description of these experiments.

*Author's  
first  
advocacy of  
cremation:*

*shown to be  
practicable.*

*Public  
opinion  
aroused,*

*and not  
altogether  
unfriendly.*

six months of that year, I received eight hundred letters on the subject, from persons mostly unknown to me, requiring objections to be answered, explanations to be given, supposed consequences to be provided for ; some, indeed, accompanied with much criticism on the "pagan," or "anti-Christian," tendency of the plan. I was encouraged, however, to find that a considerable number were more or less friendly to the proposal. But I confess I had been scarcely prepared to expect that people in general would be so much startled by it, as if it were a novelty hitherto unheard of. Long familiar with it in thought myself, cherishing a natural preference for the manifest advantages it offers, on sanitary grounds, to burial, and, after thoughtful comparison, on all considerations governed by feeling or sentiment, the opposition manifested appeared to me curiously out of proportion with the importance of certain interests or predilections I had

*Regarded as  
a theory  
which*

perhaps underestimated. Even the few who approved yielded for the most part a weak assent to the confident assertion of a host of opponents that, whatever might be the fate of the theory, any realization of it could never at all events occur in our time. To use a phrase invented since that date, the proposal was not regarded as coming within the range of a practical policy.

*at some re-*

At some future day, when the world's population

had largely increased, we might possibly be driven to submit to such a process, but, thank Heaven! the good old-fashioned resting-place in the churchyard or cemetery would amply suffice to meet all demands for several future generations still.

*more period  
might be  
practically  
useful.*

To some of the natural and practical objections, especially those which had been urged by men of experience, weight, and position, entitled to be listened to with respect and attention, I endeavoured to reply in a subsequent article which appeared two months later in the same journal. This paper follows the original one, and constitutes with it Part II. of this work.

*Some active  
controversy  
followed.*

Meantime, during January and March, 1874, a few persons interested in the subject met at my house, and agreed to form a society for the purpose of advocating cremation. The declaration now used was there drawn up on the 13th of January, and signed by them. The first to do so were "Shirley Brooks, William Eassie, Ernest Hart, the Rev. H. R. Haweis, G. H. Hawkins, John Cordy Jeaffreson, F. Lehmann, C. F. Lord, W. Shaen, A. Strahan, Henry Thompson, Major Vaughan, Rev. C. Voysey, T. Spencer Wells, and Mrs. Crawshay;" and these subsequently formed the committee.

*A cremation  
society  
proposed.*

The society was "formally constituted at a meeting on April 29th, after which a provisional

committee was at once formed ; Sir H. Thompson elected president, and to act as its chairman ;" the annual subscription fixed at a guinea ; Mr. Eassie appointed secretary, and acting thus for the first time at this meeting. He had previously assisted me in dealing with most of the voluminous correspondence referred to, and, as a sanitary engineer, took much interest in our proceedings. Four of the above-named gentlemen have since died ; the others, with three exceptions, still remain on the council of the society. Such was the origin of "The Cremation Society of England." It was organized expressly for the purpose of disseminating information on the subject, and of adopting the best method of performing the process as soon as this could be determined, provided that the act was not contrary to law. In this society I have had the honour of holding the office of president from the commencement to the present date, endeavouring thus to serve a most able and efficient council, most of whom have been fellow-workers during the same period. I am thus well acquainted with its labours and their results, and with each step in its history.

*The English  
Cremation  
Society  
formed in  
April, 1874.*

The membership of the society was constituted by subscription to the following declaration, carefully drawn so as to ensure approval of a principle, rather than adhesion to any specific practice :—



“We disapprove the present custom of bury-  
ing the dead, and desire to substitute some  
mode which shall rapidly resolve the body into  
its component elements by a process which can-  
not offend the living, and shall render the  
remains absolutely innocuous. Until some  
better method is devised, we desire to adopt  
that usually known as cremation.”

*Declaration  
adopted.*

And the conditions of membership are :—

*The con-  
ditions of  
membership.*

I.—Adhesion by signature to the above  
declaration.

II.—The payment of an annual subscription  
of one guinea, or a single payment of ten  
guineas, which latter confers the right to cre-  
mation at death, without fee, if a written notice  
is signed by the subscriber and deposited with  
the society when the subscription is made.

The council of the society commenced opera-  
tions by submitting a case to legal authorities  
of high standing, and received two opinions,  
maintaining that cremation of a human body  
was not an illegal act, provided no nuisance of  
any kind was occasioned thereby. Thus advised,  
an arrangement was soon after concluded with  
the directors of one of the great cemeteries  
north of London to erect on their property a  
building in which cremation should be effectively  
performed. This site, so appropriate for its  
purpose, and so well placed in relation to neigh-

*Legal  
opinions  
taken.*

*Search for a  
site.*

bouring property, etc., would have been at once occupied, had not the then Bishop of Rochester, within whose jurisdiction the cemetery lay, exercised his authority by absolutely prohibiting the proposed addition.

*Woking  
selected,*

*and a free-  
hold  
purchased.*

It was necessary, therefore, to find an independent site, and the council naturally sought it at Woking, since railway facilities for the removal of the dead from the metropolitan district already existed in connection with the well-known cemetery there. Accordingly, in the year 1878, an acre of freehold land in a secluded situation was purchased, with the view of placing thereupon a furnace and apparatus of the most approved kind for effecting the purpose.

*Gorini's  
furnace  
adopted,*

*and erected  
by himself  
and  
Mr. Eassie.*

After much consideration it was decided to adopt the apparatus designed by Professor Gorini, of Lodi, Italy; and that gentleman accepted an invitation to visit this country for the express purpose of superintending the erection of it, and the plan was successfully carried out in 1879 by the late Mr. Eassie, already named as our honorary secretary.

When the apparatus was finished, it was tested by Gorini himself, who reduced to ashes the body of a horse, in presence of several members of the council, with a rapidity and completeness which more than fulfilled their

expectations. This experiment foreshadowed the result which numerous actual cremations have since realized, namely, that by this process complete combustion of an adult human body is effected in from one to two hours, and is so perfectly accomplished that no smoke or effluvia escapes from the chimney; every portion of organic matter being reduced to harmless gases and a pure white, dry ash, which is absolutely free from disagreeable character of any kind. Indeed, regarded as an organic chemical product, it must be considered as attractive in appearance rather than the contrary. The process, of course, is considerably lengthened if the body is enclosed in a thick shell or coffin, which has to be burned also.

During the year 1879 the society met with strong opposition from the Home Office, and were involved in a long correspondence, not of sufficient interest to be presented here either wholly or in part. But it was the occasion of much labour and anxiety to the working members of the council, and of disappointment to their hopes: demanding moreover, on the score of prudence, a patient and quiescent policy on the part of the council, and delaying the use of the building for a few years.

Nevertheless there was no reason why public attention to the proposed method should not be

*What it  
accom-  
plishes.*

*Opposition  
to cremation  
at the Home  
Office in  
1879.*

*British  
Medical  
Association  
in 1880,*

invited by other means. My friend Sir Spencer Wells, one of the most active members of the council, brought the subject prominently before the medical profession at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association at Cambridge in August, 1880, and, after a forcible statement of facts and arguments, proposed to forward an address to the Secretary of State, asking permission to use the crematory under strict regulations. This was largely signed and duly transmitted, achieving, however, no immediate result. But in various quarters, and at different times during this period, advocacy by means of essays, articles in journals, lectures, etc., had arisen spontaneously, no organization having been set on foot for the purpose; several members of the council, however, taking part in some of these proceedings.\* And I desire to

*application  
addressed to  
the Home  
Secretary.*

*The subject  
explained  
and  
discussed:*

\* A brief record of works issued chiefly by members of the council, affording trustworthy information to those who desire to be acquainted with modern literature on the subject, is given below.

“Cremation: the Treatment of the Body after Death.” By Sir Henry Thompson, F.R.C.S. London: 1874. *Contemporary Review*.

“Burial or Cremation.” By Dr. P. H. Holland. 1874. *Contemporary Review*.

Sermon delivered at Westminster Abbey. By the Bishop of Lincoln. London: 1874.

“Cremation, and its Bearings on Public Health.” Illustrated By W. Eassie, C.E. London: Smith, Elder and Co. 1875.

“Ashes to Ashes: A Cremation Prelude.” By the Rev. H. R. Haweis, M.A. London: 1875.

add that the share which Mr. Eassie, our honorary secretary, whose sudden and recent death we *Mr. Eassie's valuable services.*

"On the Disposal of the Dead." By Dr. Richardson, F.R.S. London : 1875.

"A Contribution to the Subject of Cremation." By Dr. Albert J. Bernays, M.A. London : 1875.

Cremation—Numerous Articles in *British Medical Journal*, *Medical Record*, and *Sanitary Record*. By Ernest Hart. 1875 to present date.

"Cremation, a Sanitary Institution." (Leamington Congress Reports.) By W. Eassie, C.E. London : 1877.

"The Asserted Loss of Ammonia caused by the Cremation of Bodies." By W. Eassie, C.E. *Sanitary Record*, January 18, 1878.

Transactions of the Cremation Society, and Reports, from the earliest time to the present.

"Cremation or Burial." By Sir T. Spencer Wells, Bart. Cambridge : 1880.

"God's Acre Beautiful ; or, The Cemeteries of the Future." 2nd Edition, enlarged ; with Engravings and Photographs of Urns, etc. By W. Robinson, F.L.S. London : 1882.

"Cremation in its Social and Sanitary Aspects." By the Rev. Brooke Lambert, M.A., B.C.L. Lewisham and Blackheath Scientific Association. 1883.

"Cremation." By Dr. J. Comyns Leach. London : 1884.

"Cremation : Transactions of International Health Exhibition." By W. Eassie, C.E. 1884.

"Lecture on Cremation." By the Rev. Charles Voysey, M.A. Southampton : 1884.

"Cremation," etc., a reprint. By Sir Henry Thompson. 3rd Edition ; together with the "Paper on Cremation or Burial," by Sir T. Spencer Wells, Bart. ; and containing also the Charge of Sir James Stephen, at Cardiff, declaring Cremation legal. London : Smith, Elder and Co. 1884.

"Lecture on Cremation." By Sir T. Spencer Wells, Bart. Parkes Museum. April, 1885.

"The Modern Cremation Movement." By Charles Cameron, M.D., LL.D., M.P. Paisley and London : Alexander Gardner. 1888.

"Modern Cremation : its history and practice, with infor-

deeply deplore, took in this work, his ceaseless attention to the arranging of practical details at Woking, and the multifarious correspondence, etc., he conducted during fourteen years, demand a warm tribute Of grateful acknowledgment from me here, on the part of his late friends and colleagues on the council.

*Cremation  
at Milan  
in a gas  
furnace,  
1876.*

Meantime the progress of cremation abroad may be again referred to. The first cremation of a human body effected in a closed receptacle, with the object of carrying off or destroying offensive products, with the exception of the Dresden example referred to, took place at Milan, in January, 1876, and was followed by another in April, the agent adopted being gas. The next occurring there, in March, 1877, was accomplished in like manner, but by employing ordinary fuel. It was in Milan also, in September following, that the first cremation was performed by the improved furnace of Gorini, already mentioned. In the preceding year, 1876, the Cremation Society of Milan had been established, under the presidency of Dr. Pini, and it soon became popular and influential.

*Milan Cre-  
mation  
Society in  
1876.*

mation relating to the recently improved arrangements made by the Cremation Society of England." By Sir Henry Thompson, F.R.C.S., M.B. London, President of the Society. London : Kegan Paul, Trench and Co. 1889.

"Cremation and Urn-Burial; or, The Cemeteries of the Future." By W. Robinson, F.L.S. Cassell and Co. 1889.

During that year a handsome building was erected with the view of using gas as the agent ; but it was subsequently enlarged, namely in 1880, to make room for two Gorini furnaces. These were soon in operation, and since that date many bodies have been burned every year, the number up to the 31st of December, 1886, being 463. *Gorini's furnace adopted at Milan first in 1880 ;*

Similar buildings on a smaller scale have been constructed, and largely employed elsewhere ; for example, at Lodi, Cremona, Brescia, Padua, Varese, and more lately at Rome, in the Campo Varano cemetery. This was first used in April, 1883, since which date 123 cremations have been performed there up to the 31st of December, 1886. The number of all cremations occurring in other towns, excluding Milan and Rome, up to the same date, is 202, making 788 for Italy alone. *others in Italy since, and numbers cremated.*

In Germany, the only place at which the practice has been regularly followed is Gotha. A building was constructed there, under permission of the Government, the first cremation taking place in January, 1879. It has been largely employed since, the number of cremations amounting to 473 up to the 31st of October, 1887.\* *Germany ; the Gotha crematory largely employed.*

\* As this work is passing through the press, I have received the following note from Germany : " L'incinération des restes du baron de Handel, qui a eu lieu à Gotha, dans la journée du 15 janvier, 1889, a été la 600<sup>e</sup> cérémonie funèbre de ce genre qui ait été célébrée dans cette ville."

*Other  
European  
countries.*

*United  
States.*

*The Buffalo  
crematory.*

*Australia:  
an impor-  
tant move-  
ment.*

them with numerous members and displaying much activity, have been recently established in other countries ; in Denmark (where the first cremation in a Gorini apparatus took place in September, 1886), in Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, Sweden, and Norway, and in various parts of the United States, where also cremation has been employed on many occasions. In the city of Buffalo a well-organized crematory has been established in the most beautiful part of the suburbs. Both externally and internally its arrangements are planned and executed in good taste, and its furnace is one of the most efficient kind. The system is growing in favour, and is more frequently adopted in each successive year.

In Australia, the Hon. J. M. Creed, a well-known physician in Sydney, has warmly advocated the practice, which has numerous supporters there. He moved the second reading of a bill, to establish and regulate cremation, in the House of Assembly, June, 1886, in an able speech, pointing out the dangerous proximity of neighbouring cemeteries to their rapidly developing city, and giving instances in which great risk had been already incurred. He cited in illustration the occurrence of pestilence thus produced among the rapidly growing population in the suburbs of New York and other American



cities. The act was approved by the Legislative Council, but failed to pass the House of Assembly.

In Paris, projects for performing cremation were discussed for some years before one was adopted. At length, about four years ago, a crematory of considerable size was constructed under the direction of the municipal council, in the well-known cemetery of Père la Chaise. The entrance of the building leads into a spacious hall, sufficing for the purposes of a chapel. In the side wall opposite the entrance are three openings, each conducting to an apparatus constructed on the Gorini principle. It was first employed, by way of testing its powers, on the 22nd of October, 1887, for the bodies of two men who died of small-pox. The result was very satisfactory, but as the demand for cremation soon became large, a new furnace was constructed, and is now used in preference to those previously made. I had an opportunity of examining it, and of seeing several cremations performed there in April last. The interior of a chamber is kept constantly at a bright red heat, by burning coke in a closed reservoir outside, the products of which, chiefly carbonic oxide, pass through in a state of combustion and rapidly consume the body. This is now being superseded by a chamber containing hot air only,

*The Paris  
crematory.*

supplied by a furnace working on the regenerative principle, which acts still more rapidly than the preceding. At the date of my visit, the cremations in Paris were taking place at the rate of about three or four hundred a month, and were increasing in number monthly. A total of more than three thousand had then been reached.

*An important incident occurred in England, in 1882,*

I shall now return to the history of our own society, at a time when it was probable that active operations might once more be resumed. In 1882 the council was requested by Captain Hanham, Blandford, Dorsetshire, to undertake the cremation of two deceased members of his family, who had left express instructions to that effect. The Home Secretary of that day being applied to, reiterated objections which had been made three years before, and the society was unable to comply. The bodies had been preserved for some years in a mausoleum on the estate, pending a favourable solution of the difficulty. This failing, Captain Hanham took leave to erect a crematorium there, and to carry out the wishes of his relatives, and did so with complete success. This was in October, 1882. He himself dying about a year later, was cremated on the same spot at his desire, by a relative. The Government meantime made no sign; no notice, in fact, was taken of the pro-

*through the act of Captain Hanham.*

ceeding by any authority, although the occurrence was described in the public journals, and excited much comment. But in the following year a *The Welsh cremation followed soon,* cremation took place in Wales on the body of a child, on which the ceremony was performed by the father in defiance of the coroner's authority, and legal proceedings were taken against him in consequence. The result was that, in February, 1884, Mr. Justice Stephen, the case having come before him at the assizes, delivered his well-known judgment, declaring that cremation is a legal procedure provided it be effected without nuisance to others. The council of the English society now decided on offering facilities for performing it, and to place their crematorium at the service of the public for practical use ; having first carefully considered the best means of taking precautions to prevent the destruction of a body which might have met death by unfair means.

Only two months later, on the 30th of April, 1884, Dr. Cameron, the member for Glasgow, and one of the council of our society, brought a bill into the House of Commons "to provide for the regulation of cremation and other modes of disposal of the dead." He proposed to make burial illegal without medical certificate, excepting for the present certain thinly populated and remote districts. No crematory to be used until *The same year a bill brought into Parliament, to regulate cremation,*

approved and licensed by the Secretary of State; no body to be burned except at a licensed place, in accordance with regulations to be made by the Secretary of State. Two medical certificates to be necessary in the case of cremation, and if the cause of death cannot be certified, an inquest by the coroner shall be held. Dr. Cameron supported the proposals, by an amount of evidence of various kinds which amply warranted the course he had taken. Dr. Farquharson, M.P. for Aberdeen, another member of the council, seconded the motion, which was opposed by the Home Secretary, to whom Sir Lyon Playfair made an able reply, demonstrating, by a comparison of the chemical effects of combustion with those of slow decomposition in earth, the superiority of the former. The bill was opposed by the Government, and the leader of the opposition took the same course; nevertheless, no less than 79 members voted in favour of the bill on the second reading, to 149 against—a result far more favourable than we had ventured to hope for.

*strongly supported in debate, and*

*by a large minority on division.*

*The English society determined to use their crematory,*

It was at this juncture that the English society issued a public notice, formulating certain conditions on which they would undertake to employ the crematorium at Woking. They stated that great care and absolute compliance with their conditions were necessary, because

“ they are aware the chief practical objection which can be urged against the employment of cremation consists in the opportunity which it offers, apart from such precautions, for removing the traces of poison or other injury which are retained by an undestroyed body.”

These conditions were expressed in the following terms :—

1. An application in writing must be made by the executors or nearest relative of the deceased—unless it has been made in writing by the deceased person himself during life—stating that the deceased expressed no objection to be cremated after death. They must furnish the name of the medical man who has attended the deceased, in order that he may receive an official communication from the secretary before certifying.

2. A certificate must be sent by a qualified medical man, who, having attended the deceased until the time of death, can state without hesitation that the cause of death was natural, and what that cause was. Another qualified medical man, if possible a resident in the immediate neighbourhood of the deceased, is also required to certify, after independently examining the facts within his reach, that to the best of his belief the death was due to natural causes.\*

\* See Part III.

To each of these gentlemen is to be forwarded, before certifying, a letter of "instructions" marked "private," signed by the president of the society, calling special attention to the important nature of the service required.

3. *Further inquiries when necessary.*

3. If no medical man attended during the illness, an autopsy must be made by a medical officer appointed by the society, or the cremation cannot take place ; unless a coroner's inquest has been held, and has determined the cause of death to be natural. These conditions being fulfilled, the council of the society still reserve the right in all cases of refusing permission for the performance of cremation if they think it desirable to do so.\*

*First cremation at Woking in 1885.*

Public attention had thus been called to the subject ; and the Woking crematory was used for the first time on the 20th of March, 1885, two other cremations following in the course of the year. During 1886, ten bodies were burned, five male and five female, one of them that of a Brahmin. During 1887, thirteen bodies were burned, one only being that of a female. During 1888, twenty-eight bodies were burned, fifteen being female. During 1889, forty-six bodies were burned, nineteen being female. During 1890, fifty-four bodies were burned, twenty-one being female ; and during the first twelve weeks

\* See Part III.

of 1891, twenty-three bodies were burned, seven being female; a total since the beginning of one hundred and seventy-seven cremations.

The complete incineration is accomplished by this apparatus without escape of smoke or other offensive product, and with extreme ease and rapidity.

The ashes, which weigh about three or four pounds, are placed at the disposal of the friends, in order to be removed. A vase of pottery, modelled after an ancient Roman cinerary urn, is provided for the purpose without charge. This may be buried in the grounds of the crematorium, in a spot set apart, maintained and marked by a stone for a long term of years, on payment of a trifling fee. Or a niche in the hall of the crematorium may be secured on conditions which can be learned on application at the offices of the society. A large number of such cells or recesses, each capable of receiving an ornamental urn or sarcophagus, will be constructed in a cloister, which it is proposed shortly to build for the express purpose of providing a suitable receptacle for such deposits. Or, if desired, the ashes may be restored at once to the soil, being now perfectly innocuous, if that mode of dealing with them is preferred. One friend of the deceased may be present at the cremation, if written permission is first obtained from the honorary secretary of the society.

*A total of one hundred and seventy-seven cremations has been reached.*

*The ashes are carefully preserved for friends of deceased.*

*Mode of  
proceeding  
when  
cremation is  
applied for.*

Practically, what takes place when an application for cremation has been made is as follows:—

Evidence from the medical attendant of the deceased, as well as that of another and independent medical man, is obtained in writing. Their attention is called by letter to the importance of an inquiry respecting poison or violence as a cause of death. The forms containing it are in every case submitted to the president of the society, who, acting on behalf of the council, decides whether or not the cremation may take place. The papers being approved, the undertaker can remove the body in a hearse from any house or station within the four-mile radius from Charing Cross to the society's cemetery at Woking for a reasonable fixed sum. Or he can arrange for its transport, together with that of any number of friends and attendants desired, by rail, direct from Waterloo Station to Woking.

*Recommendations  
to the  
applicant.*

It is strongly recommended to all applicants that no large, heavy, or ornamental coffins should be employed for the purpose, but, on the contrary, only a thin, light, pine shell ; \* as in the former case cremation cannot take place without removing the body, and in the latter there is no necessity to do so, and accordingly the practice is to burn the whole together.

But, after a considerable experience of crema-

\* See Part III.



tion both here and abroad, I do not hesitate to say that I greatly prefer the plan of completely enveloping the body (already habited in the ordinary shroud) in a long narrow sheet, say 10 feet by 5, previously placed lengthways over a simple empty shell. The last act before finally closing the shell should be that of folding the sides of the sheet across the body, one overlapping the other, so as to cover it entirely. Thus the folded ends of the sheet will extend some two feet or so, above and below the head and feet of the body respectively. Above each of these points, a piece of stout white tape or white web should be firmly tied round the folded sheet, and in two places round the covered body also, so as to maintain the sheet in its place. These ends are then turned over towards each other into the shell before the lid is adjusted and fastened. Immediately before the act of cremation commences, the shell should be opened, the body be carefully and reverently lifted out of the shell by a bearer at each end of the sheet, a third supporting the centre, and be placed on the frame which enters the crematorium. By this means the ashes of the body are not mixed with those of the shell, which must necessarily be the case if both are burned together, requiring a tedious and somewhat imperfect procedure to separate them. Moreover, the wood hinders and prolongs the work of

*Best method  
is to burn  
the body  
without any  
shell,*

*secured  
in a sheet,*

*which  
should be  
made of  
wool.*

cremation proper. The sheet may be made of cotton linen, or wool, but the latter is preferable, because its constituents are largely dissipated in combustion, whereas the vegetable fibre yields and leaves a large quantity of carbon in the form of ash. In the draught of a powerful furnace, some of this fine matter is no doubt carried away.

The charge made by the society for effecting cremation is moderate, and will be made less when the demand has considerably increased. At present the entire apparatus has to be put into action for a single cremation, involving an amount of labour and expenditure which would be only slightly exceeded for three or four repetitions of the process,\* if they occurred during a single day.

*Engagement  
offered to  
persons  
desiring to  
ensure cre-  
mation at  
death;*

About four years ago, the council made public the following resolution, in the form of a "minute of council," which after due consideration had been passed: "In the event of any person desiring, during life, to be cremated at death, the society is prepared to accept a donation from him or her of ten guineas, undertaking, in consideration thereof, to perform the cremation without the customary fee, provided all the conditions set forth in the forms issued by the society are complied with." This payment moreover, constitutes the donor a life-member

\* See Part III.

of the society, and he receives the annual report and all documents, etc., issued to the ordinary annual subscribers.

A considerable number of persons have adopted this course in order to express emphatically their wishes in relation to this matter, and to ensure as far as possible the accomplishment of them. The society undertakes to do their utmost to facilitate the subscriber's object ; and probably no better mode of effecting the purpose can be selected than that of placing a written declaration of the testator's wish, together with the society's signed undertaking, in the hands of the friends who are to act as executors. Hence, on the decease of a subscriber, the society undertakes to send, without further charge, an agent when required to the family residence, if within twenty miles of Charing Cross, in order to supply information and make all the necessary arrangements. In this way survivors, who may naturally anticipate considerable difficulty in complying with a request, on the part of the deceased, to be cremated, being often ignorant even of the mode of making an inquiry, may be spared all anxiety as to the manner of carrying his design into execution. Where the distance is greater than twenty miles, all information will be supplied by letter, or an agent sent for a very moderate charge.

*has been largely adopted.*

*How this arrangement helps to ensure the realization of applicant's wish.*

*At first the  
crematory  
only existed  
at Woking,  
for lack of  
funds to  
construct  
other  
buildings.*

It has long been the desire of the council to render the crematory established at Woking as complete as possible. Although they have had reason hitherto to be satisfied with the capability of the apparatus employed, and with the results obtained, recent improvements had been made in furnace-construction, and these have been recently applied there. A full description of the furnace employed follows in its place. But they were especially desirous to provide buildings suitable for the performance of religious service at the crematory when required, besides waiting-rooms for the accommodation of friends and other visitors. Before these were erected, a funeral service had in most cases been performed before the arrival of the body at Woking; although in some instances it was held in the grounds of the crematory.

*Appeal  
recently  
made for  
funds;*

About three years ago the council decided on making a special appeal to the public for funds to carry out this purpose, and a considerable sum was soon provided by subscription. The list was headed by a hundred guineas each from the late Duke of Bedford and the Duke of Westminster, who warmly testified their interest in the project.

*resulting in  
the erection  
of a spacious  
hall and*

When about three-fourths of the required sum had been received, plans were prepared by Mr. E. F. C. Clarke, the architect, and after

tenders had been obtained and a contract made, <sup>waiting-rooms.</sup> the designs were carried out with much care and in a very substantial manner.

The buildings were constructed in the cha- <sup>Character of buildings.</sup> racter of English thirteenth-century Gothic, with richly tracced windows, agreeable in appearance, the buildings harmonizing well with the surrounding woods. The body of the structure is in red brick, relieved to a large extent by Bath stone; and when the grass terraces and gardens are completed, the general effect will be extremely good. The central <sup>The hall or chapel.</sup> hall, or chapel, is forty-eight feet long by twenty-four feet six inches wide. The vista of the roof, which is twenty-eight feet from the floor to the top panelling, is thus left intact. The hall is so arranged that those who attend see and hear nothing of the proceedings in the crematory proper. Its ceiling is richly panelled, and will, as well as the walls, be suitably decorated; the windows are filled with stained glass. A convenient ante-room and porch are arranged <sup>Waiting-rooms, etc.</sup> in this space by the introduction of richly panelled and moulded screens. Suitable lavatories, etc., are provided.

In connection with these buildings is another, <sup>The Duke of Bedford's private crematory.</sup> a small but very complete crematory for the exclusive possession of the late Duke of Bedford, which has been built at his expense on the

society's land. It was used for the first time, after the lamented death of his Grace, for the cremation of his remains, in accordance with express instructions, on January 18, 1891.

*The lodge.* A pretty porter's lodge, at the entrance of the well-wooded grounds, forms the dwelling of the attendant and superintendent of the crematory.

The drawing placed as frontispiece to this volume is reproduced from a sketch by the architect, and shows the hall or chapel as the loftiest part of the structure, the next block with the chimney being the chief crematory, beyond which is the private one just referred to. The waiting-rooms are on the further side of the chapel.

*Description  
of the  
furnace.*

The furnace employed is too important a part of the appointments at Woking to be left without a full description. The following has been supplied by the well-known firm of Newlands Brothers, Chemical Engineers, London, who designed and superintended its erection for the society, and is taken by permission from the report recently issued for the past year:—

FIG. 1. Longitudinal vertical section.

„ 2. Plan of the floor of the cremation chamber.

„ 3. Cross section through the furnace.

FIG. 4. Ditto through the floor of the cremation chamber.

„ 5. Platform in front of the cremation furnace, showing the carrier.

*A*, Fireplace, with grate bars.

*B*, Furnace door.

*C*, Floor of the cremation chamber, the sides of which are four inches higher than the central portion.

*D*, Doorway for the introduction of the body.

*D*<sup>1</sup>, Fireproof door closing the latter.

*E*, Flue passing over the end of the floor and returning underneath, connected at *F* with the main flue *G* leading to the chimney.

*H*, By-pass flue connected with the main flue at *J*.

*K*, Arches supporting the floor of the chamber.

*L*, Partition walls with pigeon-holes for the purpose of ensuring the complete combustion of the gases.

*M*, Damper to be lowered during the introduction of the body, at which time the by-pass flue *H* is used by opening the damper at *J* and closing that at *F*.

*N*, Sloping arch to cause the flame to be

*Description  
of the  
furnace  
(continued).*

deflected sharply downward midway upon the floor of the chamber.

*O*, Air-space between the furnace and the outer walls.

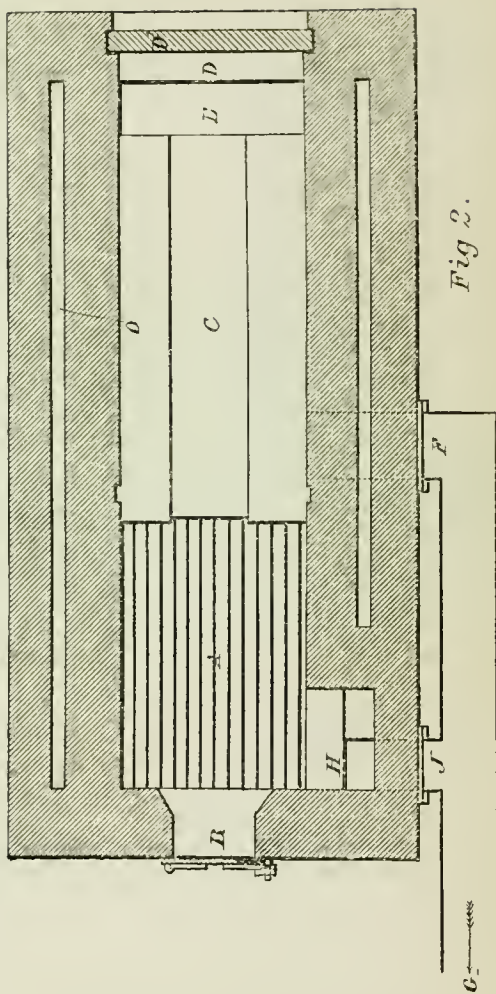
*P*, Platform upon which the carrier stands to receive the body.

*Q*, Wrought iron carrier upon wheels running on rails.

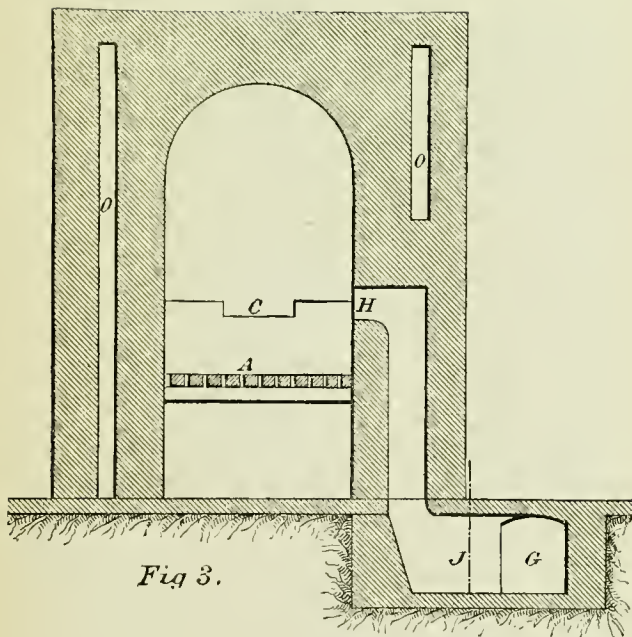
*R*, Loose bearers laid upon the carrier to support the body or coffin when the carrier is pushed forward into the chamber and slightly lowered; the bearers rest upon the raised sides of the floor and admit of the carrier being withdrawn from beneath them. The link form of these bearers facilitates their withdrawal from the chamber when the cremation is ended.

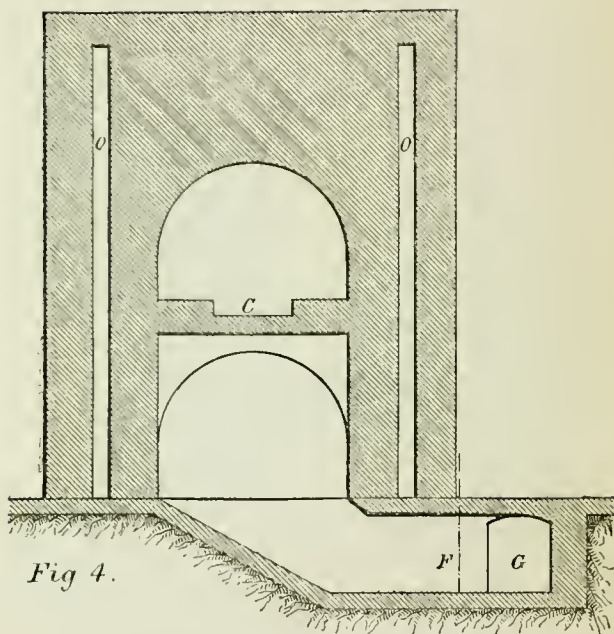






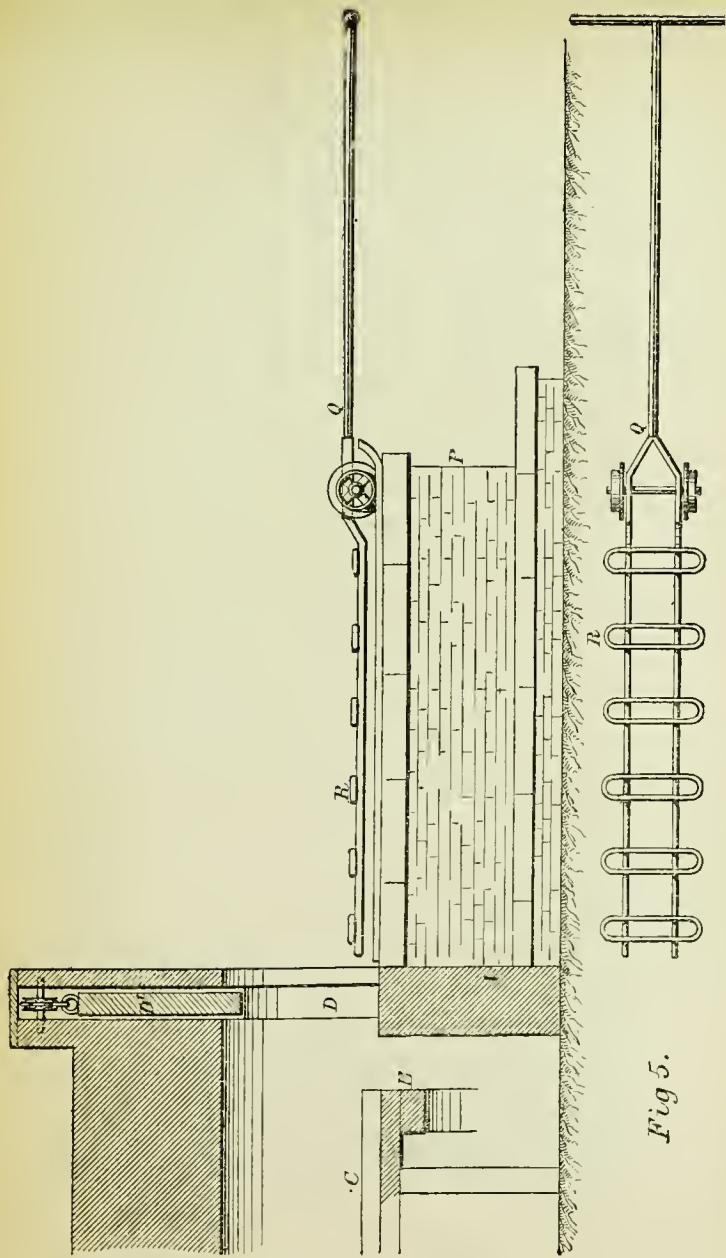
PLAN OF THE FLOOR OF THE CREMATION CHAMBER.





*Fig 4.*

CROSS SECTION THROUGH THE FLOOR OF THE CREMATION  
CHAMBER.



*Fig 5.*

PLATFORM IN FRONT OF THE CREMATION FURNACE, SHOWING THE CARRIER.

*All the  
society's  
property is  
freehold,*

*and un-  
incumbered.*

*Generous  
aid of the  
late Duke of  
Bedford.*

I am happy to say that the cost of all these buildings, as well as of an additional piece of land lying to the left of the original plot, has been defrayed, that the society's property is a freehold absolutely without incumbrance, and that it is vested in the hands of trustees. The council is largely indebted to the generous aid of the late lamented Duke of Bedford, who took great interest in the progress of the building, and in the perfecting of all arrangements connected with the process of cremation. Thanks to the Duke's countenance and support, which he was ever ready to afford me, as president of the society, and which I cannot too gratefully acknowledge, as well as to the personal efforts which the members of a most efficient council made in its behalf, the present satisfactory condition of our enterprise has been attained. But I must be permitted to state that his Grace the Duke of Bedford, besides defraying the cost of the crematory constructed for himself and his family, gave me from time to time, as funds were required to complete our buildings, sums amounting to no less than £2500, and furthermore purchased for the society half an acre of ground adjacent to our property, which forms a very useful addition. Only a fortnight before his death, he suggested to me that we required an apparatus for warming the

chapel, and requested me to get what I thought best, and allow him to have the pleasure of presenting us with it.

Our current annual expenditure is considerable. The wear and tear of the furnace, due to the intense heat necessarily employed, rapidly occasions dilapidation requiring repair. This will be met in future by the income derived from cremation fees, as will be the cost of the superintendent's salary and occasional assistance, for gardening, etc. From this source also have to be paid the rent of the London offices, and all service and other charges connected therewith. The small income contributed by annual subscriptions to the society serves to defray the cost of printing prospectuses, forms, periodical reports, etc.; the whole involving an amount of expenditure requiring all the revenue at present obtained.

In order to complete the establishment at Woking, it is proposed to erect a handsome cloister in a style corresponding with that of the building, constructed with open arches on one side, to be protected by glass from the weather. The estimated cost is £1500; and the object is to offer secure and appropriate cells for the protection of ashes, giving, so far as this is possible, a permanent interest therein to the family of the deceased if they desire it.

*Current  
annual ex-  
penditure,  
how  
provided for*

*Proposed  
cloister for  
preserving  
cinerary  
urns, etc.*



These cells will be of various forms and sizes, adapted to receive a cinerary vase or more or less rectangular casket or sarcophagus. A single cell may thus be secured ; or any number may be retained as a separate group, to form a family vault if required. Donations are wanted to enable the council to carry out this work.

*Various  
examples of  
cinerary  
urns,*

Examples of cinerary urns employed in ancient times exist in great abundance, and they vary in character as the customs and rites of the locality differed, and with the historic period at which they were made. Thus "urns" of many kinds, at first rude in workmanship, assumed in time pleasing forms, and were ornamented with simple patterns. Later still appeared the vase-like urns adopted by the Greeks ; but few of these are suitable for general use for the limited areas remaining among the crowded populations of modern time. Although beautiful in form and admirably adapted for artistic ornament, they are liable to be easily damaged, and necessarily occupy considerable space. More safe in regard of durability, and more convenient in relation to deposit or storage, is a receptacle, the form of which is contained within the lines of a parallelogram ; while such a vessel offers ample opportunity for artistic treatment. Examples



of this kind were employed by the Greeks, under the name of κίστη (in Latin, *cista*),\* and by the Etruscans; although the term "urna" originally denoted vessels of this form as well as those allied to that of the vase. The materials employed for their construction were <sup>made</sup> various, such as terra-cotta, often travertine, <sup>of several</sup> sometimes marble, alabaster, and even glass, <sup>materials</sup> at that time more costly than any. The well-<sup>and in</sup> known "sarcophagus," oblong in form, and large <sup>different</sup> enough to contain the entire unburned body, <sup>forms.</sup> often much larger, was elaborately ornamented. Sculptures in high and low relief adorned their sides, and statuesque recumbent groups often occupied the lid, the subjects having some relation to the deeds, tastes, or occupations of the departed. The smaller *cistæ* above referred to resembled the preceding, but were comparatively small, being designed to hold the ashes only after cremation. One of these is represented by Fig. 6. It is interesting to remark that the word *σαρκοφάγος*, derived from two Greek words denoting the eating or consuming of the body, was originally employed to denote vessels made of a limestone found in Assos, in Troas, which possessed some of the chemical power of quicklime. After being deposited

\* There is a collection of these small forms on the first floor, beyond the Greek vases, in the British Museum.

*Cinerary  
urns and  
sarcophagi.*

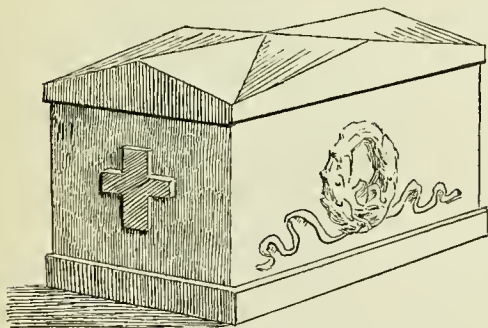
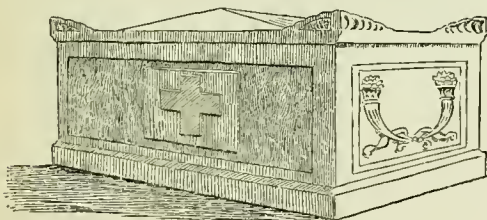
therein, it rapidly decomposed the dead body, destroying the tissues (Pliny said, "in forty days"!), leaving only the skeleton; and this process formed an excellent, because sanitary, mode of burial.



FIG. 6.—AN ETRUSCAN "CISTA" IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Numerous examples of sarcophagi and cinerary urns are preserved in the Gregorian Museum at the Vatican, at the Kircherian Museum, and at that of St. John Lateran, Rome; there are many others also at the Campo Santo Pisa, at Florence, Bologna, and

Perugia. I have recently endeavoured to utilize *forms* some of the best types among these, and to *proposed for* produce some simple forms generally modified *modern use.* from more ornate designs, and to present them not only on purely classical lines, but with the



FIGS. 7 AND 8.—SIMPLE FORMS OF CINERARY URNS, DESIGNED BY THE AUTHOR.

Christian emblem of the cross. The panel thus occupied may be used for the name of the deceased, or for any inscription desired. Having submitted two or three to Messrs. Doulton and Sons, these gentlemen kindly entered at once

*Cinerary  
urns.*

on the work, and have produced them on reasonable terms in terra cotta. Two are given here (Figs. 7, 8). They measure at most sixteen inches in length by eight inches in height and eight inches in width, and afford ample space for the ashes of the largest body. Such receptacles are well adapted to occupy cells or niches



FIG. 9.

of appropriate size, side by side, in the walls of a cloister, each cell closed, say, by a small marble slab bearing the name of the deceased.

*Cinerary  
vase.*

Of course, where it is desired to construct some monumental shrine by itself, the vase-like urn may find an appropriate place. Many examples of this kind are to be found in the

great cemetery of Milan, associated with the crematorium there. The Messrs. Doulton have *Examples by Doulton.*

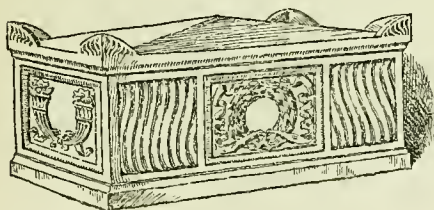


FIG. 10.

executed some good examples of this kind also, which may be seen at their establishment at



FIG. 11.

Lambeth. They have been good enough to furnish us with drawings which are reproduced above.

*Cinerary  
urns, etc.*

Fig. 9 represents the simple antique vase in pottery, of which so many have been found by excavation ; it is one of these which is given in each case of cremation at Woking, to contain and preserve the ashes when removed or buried.

Fig. 10 is a more ornate reproduction of a Roman sarcophagus at the Campo Santo, Pisa, which suggested the modification forming the cinerary urn represented at Fig. 7.

Fig. 11 is a handsome vase, in well-chosen colours, made by the Messrs. Doulton expressly for cinerary purposes ; and of this they have several modifications in form, colour, and decorative design.

## PART II.

### FIRST PAPER ON CREMATION: THE TREATMENT OF THE BODY AFTER DEATH.

*By the Author. Published in the "Contemporary Review,"  
January, 1874.*

AFTER death! The last faint breath had been noted, and another watched for so long, but in vain. The body lies there, pale and motionless, except only that the jaw sinks slowly but perceptibly. The pallor visibly increases, becomes more leaden in hue, and the profound tranquil sleep of Death reigns where just now were life and movement. Here, then, begins the eternal rest.

Rest! no, not for an instant. Never was there greater activity than at this moment exists in that still corpse. Activity, but of a different kind to that which was before. Already a thousand changes have commenced. Forces innumerable have attacked the dead. The rapidity of the vulture, with its keen scent for animal decay, is nothing to that of Nature's ceaseless agents now at full work before us. That marvellously complex machine, but this

*Molecular changes after death.*

*decomposing  
and  
dispersing.*

moment the theatre of phenomena too subtle and too recondite to be comprehended ; denotable only by phraseology which stands for the unknown and incomputable—vital, because more than physical, more than chemical—is now consigned to the action of physical and chemical agencies alone. And these all operating in a direction the reverse of that which they held before death. A synthesis, then, developing the animal being. The stages of that synthesis, now, retraced, with another end, still formative, in view. Stages of decomposition, of decay, with its attendant putrescence ; process abhorrent to the living, who therefore desire its removal. “ Bury the dead out of my sight,” is the wholly natural sentiment of the survivor.

*Nature's  
object.*

But Nature does nothing without ample meaning ; nothing without an object desirable in the interest of the body politic. It may, then, be useful to inquire what must of necessity happen if, instead of burying or attempting to preserve the dead, Nature follows an unimpeded course, and the lifeless animal is left to the action of laws in such case provided.

It is necessary first to state more exactly the conditions supposed to exist. Thus, the body must be exposed to air, and must not be consumed as prey by some living animal. If it is closely covered with earth or left in water, the



same result is attained as in the condition first named, although the steps of the process may be dissimilar.

The problem which Nature sets herself to work in disposing of dead animal matter is always one and the same. The order of the universe requires its performance; no other end is possible. The problem may be slowly worked, or quickly worked: the end is always one.

It may be thus stated: The animal must be resolved into—

*a.* Carbonic Acid [ $\text{CO}_2$ ], Water [ $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ], and Ammonia [ $\text{NH}_3$ ].

*b.* Mineral constituents, more or less oxidized, elements of the earth's structure: Lime, Phosphorus, Iron, Sulphur, Magnesia, etc.

The first group, gaseous in form, go into the atmosphere.

The second group, ponderous and solid, remain where the body lies, until dissolved and washed into the earth by rain.

Nature's object remains still unstated: the constant result of her work is before us; but wherefore are these changes? In her wonderful economy she must form and bountifully nourish her vegetable progeny; twin-brother life, to her, with that of animals. The perfect balance between plant existences and animal existences

must always be maintained, while "matter" courses through the eternal circle, becoming each in turn.

To state this more intelligibly by illustration :

*becoming  
sooner or  
later,*

If an animal be resolved into its ultimate constituents in a period, according to the surrounding circumstances, say, of four hours, of four months, of four years, or even of four thousand years—for it is impossible to deny that there may be instances of all these periods during which the process has continued—those elements which assume the gaseous form mingle at once with the atmosphere, and are taken up from it without delay by the ever open mouths of vegetable life. By a thousand pores in every leaf the carbonic acid which renders the atmosphere unfit for animal life is absorbed, the carbon being separated and assimilated to form the vegetable fibre, which, as wood, makes and furnishes our houses and ships, is burned for our warmth, or is stored up under pressure for coal. All this carbon has played its part, "and many parts," in its time, as animal existences from monad up to man. Our mahogany of to-day has been many negroes in its turn, and before the African existed was integral portions of many a generation of extinct species. And when the table, which has borne so well some twenty thousand dinners, shall be broken up

*by turns  
vegetable  
and animal,*

from pure debility and consigned to the fire, thence it will issue into the atmosphere once more as carbonic acid, again to be devoured by the nearest troop of hungry vegetables—green peas or cabbages in a London market garden, *in perpetual cycle.* say—to be daintily served on the table which now stands in that other table's place, and where they will speedily go to the making of "Lords of the Creation." And so on, again and again, as long as the world lasts.

Thus it is that an even balance is kept—demonstrable to the very last grain if we could only collect the data—between the total *Exact relations between the two kingdoms.* amounts of animal and of vegetable life existing together at any instant on our globe. There *must* be an unvarying relation between the decay of animal life and the food produced by that process for the elder twin, the vegetable world. Vegetables first, consumed by animals either directly or indirectly, as when they eat the flesh of animals who live on vegetables. Secondly, these animals daily casting off effete matters, and by decay after death providing the staple food for vegetation of every description. One the necessary complement of the other. The atmosphere, polluted by every animal whose breath is poison to every other animal, being every instant purified by plants, which, taking out the deadly carbonic acid and assimi-

lating carbon, restore to the air its oxygen, first necessary of animal existence.

I suppose that these facts are known to most readers, but I require a clear statement of them here as preliminary to my next subject ; and in any case it can do no harm to reproduce a brief history of this marvellous and beautiful example of intimate relation between the two kingdoms.

I return to consider man's interference with the process in question just hinted at in the quotation, " Bury the dead out of my sight."

*Decomposition of all animal matter offensive to the living.*

The process of decomposition affecting an animal body is one that has a disagreeable, injurious, often fatal influence on the living man if sufficiently exposed to it. Thousands of human lives have been cut short by the poison of slowly decaying, and often diseased animal matter. Even the putrefaction of some of the most insignificant animals has sufficed to destroy the noblest. To give an illustration which comes nearly home to some of us—the graveyard pollution of air and water alone has probably found a victim in some social circle known to more than one who may chance to read this paper. And I need hardly add that in times of pestilence its continuance has been often due mainly to the poisonous influence of the buried victims.

Man, then, throughout all historic periods, has

got rid of his dead kin after some fashion. He has either hidden the body in a cave and closed the opening to protect its tenant from wild beasts—for the instinct of affection follows most naturally even the sadly changed remains of our dearest relative—or the same instinct has led him to embalm and preserve as much as may be so preservable,—a delay only of Nature's certain work; or, the body is buried beneath the earth's surface, in soil, in wood, in stone, or metal:—each mode another contrivance to delay, but never to prevent, the inevitable change. Or, the body is burned, and so restored at once to its original element, in which case Nature's work is hastened, her design anticipated, that is all. And after burning, the ashes may be wholly or in part preserved in some receptacle in obedience to the instinct of the survivor, referred to above. All forms of sepulture come more or less under one of these heads. What is called “burial at sea” is only a form of exposure, the body being rapidly devoured by marine animals.

*Hence  
burial of  
the dead,*

*or burning.*

One of the many social questions waiting to be solved, and which must be solved at no very remote period, is, Which of these various forms of treatment of the dead is the best for survivors? *Which is the better mode?*

This question may be regarded from two

points of view, both possessing importance, not equal in degree perhaps ; but neither can be ignored.

1. From the point of view of Utility : as to what is best for the entire community.

2. From the point of view of Sentiment : the sentiment of affectionate memory for the deceased, which is cherished by the survivor.

*1 Utility  
regarded.*

I assume that there is no point of view to be regarded as specially belonging to the deceased person, and that no one believes that the dead has any interest in the matter. We who live may anxiously hope—as I should hope at least—to do no evil to survivors after death, whatever we may have done of harm to others during life. But, being deceased, I take it we can have no wishes or feelings touching this subject. What is best to be done with the dead is then mainly a question for the living, and to them it is one of extreme importance. When the globe was thinly peopled, and when there were no large bodies of men living in close neighbourhood, the subject was an inconsiderable one and could afford to wait, and might indeed be left for its solution to sentiment of any kind. But the rapid increase of population forces it into notice, and especially man's tendency to live in crowded cities. There is no necessity to prove, as the fact is too patent, that

our present mode of treating the dead, namely, that by burial beneath the soil, is full of danger to the living. Hence intra-mural interment has been recently forbidden—first step in a series of reforms which must follow. At present we who dwell in towns are able to escape much evil by selecting a portion of ground distant—in this year of grace 1873—some five or ten miles from any very populous neighbourhood, and by sending our dead to be buried there:—laying by poison, nevertheless, it is certain, for our children's children, who will find our remains polluting their water sources, when that now distant plot is covered, as it will be, more or less closely by human dwellings. For it can be a question of time only when every now waste spot will be utilized for food-production or for shelter, and when some other mode of disposing of the dead than that of burial must be adopted. If, therefore, burial in the soil be certainly injurious either now or in the future, has not the time already come to discuss the possibility of replacing it by a better process? We cannot too soon cease to do evil and learn to do well. Is it not indeed a social sin of no small magnitude to sow the seeds of disease and death broadcast, caring only to be certain that they cannot do much harm to our own generation? It may be granted, to anticipate objection, that

*The effects  
on the living  
of burial  
in earth.*

it is quite possible that the bodies now buried may have lost most, if not all, of their faculty for doing mischief by the time that the particular soil they inhabit is turned up again to the sun's rays, although this is by no means certain; but it is beyond dispute that the margin of safety as to time grows narrower year by year, and that pollution of wells and streams which supply the living must ere long arise wherever we bury our dead in this country. Well, then, since every buried dead body enters sooner or later into the vegetable kingdom, why should we permit it, as it does in many cases, to cause an infinity of mischief during the long process?

*An economic  
view not to  
be ignored.*

Let us at this point glance at the economic view of the subject, for it is not so unimportant as, unconsidered, it may appear. For it is an economic subject whether we will it or not. No doubt a sentiment repugnant to any such view must arise in many minds, a sentiment altogether to be held in respect and sympathy. Be it so, the question remains strictly a question of prime necessity in the economic system of a crowded country. Nature will have it so, whether we like it or not. She destines the material elements of my body to enter the vegetable world on purpose to supply another animal organism which takes my place. She



wants me, and I *must* go. There is no help for it. When shall I follow—with quick obedience, or unwillingly, truant-like, traitor-like, to her and her grand design? Her capital is intended to bear good interest and to yield quick return: all her ways prove it—"increase and multiply" is her first and constant law. Shall her riches be hid in earth to corrupt and bear no present fruit; or be utilized, without loss of time, value, and interest, for the benefit of starving survivors? Nature hides no talent in a napkin; we, her unprofitable servants only, thwart her ways and delay the consummation of her will.

Is a practical illustration required? Nothing *Illustration.* is easier. London was computed, by the census of 1871, to contain 3,254,260 persons, of whom 80,430 died within the year. I have come to the conclusion, after a very carefully made estimate, that the amount of ashes and bone earth, such as is derived by perfect combustion, belonging to and buried with those persons, is by weight about 206,820 lbs. The pecuniary value of this highly concentrated form of animal solids is very considerable. For this bone-earth may be regarded as equivalent to at least six or seven times its weight of dried but unburned bones, as they ordinarily exist in commerce. The amount of other solid matters resolvable by burning into the gaseous food of plants, but

rendered unavailable by burial for, say, fifty or a hundred years or more, is about 5,584,000 lbs., the value of which is quite incalculable, but it is certainly enormous as compared with the preceding.

This is for the population of the metropolis only: that of the United Kingdom for the same year amounted to 31,483,700 persons, or nearly ten times the population of London. Taking into consideration a somewhat lower death-rate for the imperial average, it will at all events be quite within the limit of truthful statement to multiply the above quantities by nine in order to obtain the amount of valuable economic material annually diverted in the United Kingdom for a long term of years from its ultimate destiny by our present method of interment.

*Annual  
cost of bones  
imported.*

The necessary complement of this ceaseless waste of commodity most precious to organic life, and which must be replaced, or the population could not exist, is the purchase by this country of that same material from other countries less populous than our own, and which can, therefore, at present spare it. This we do to the amount of much more than half a million pounds sterling per annum.\*

\* Value of bones imported into the United Kingdom, of which by far the larger part is employed for manure, was in—

1866	.	.	.	.	.	£409,590
1869	.	.	.	.	.	600,029
1872	.	.	.	.	.	753,185

*Statistical Abstract*, No. 20 (Spottiswoode: 1873).

Few persons, I believe, have any notion that these importations of foreign bones are rendered absolutely necessary by the hoarding of our own some six feet below the surface. The former we acquire at a large cost, paying a high price for them and for freight. The latter we place, not in the upper soil, where they would be utilized, but in the lower soil, where they are not merely useless, but where they often mingle with and pollute the streams which furnish our tables. And in order to effect this absurd, if not wicked, result, we incur a lavish expenditure! I refer, <sup>Cost of</sup> of course, to the enormous sums which are <sup>burial</sup> wasted in effecting burial according to our pre- <sup>customs.</sup> sent custom, a part of the question which can by no means be passed over. For the funeral rites of the 80,000 in London last year, let a mean cost of ten pounds per head be accepted as an estimate which certainly does not err on the side of excess.\* Eight hundred thousand

\* Items comprised in the calculation—

1. Cost of shroud, coffin, labour of digging a grave—essential now in all burials.
2. Cost of funeral carriages, horses, trappings, and accoutrements.  
Ornamental coffins in wood and metal.  
Vaults and monumental art—more or less employed in all funerals above the rank of pauper.

The cost of simple modes of transit are not included in the calculation, because necessary in any case, whatever the destination of the body. The above-named items are only necessary

pounds must therefore be reckoned as absolute loss, to the costs already incurred in the maintenance of the system. Thus we pay every way and doubly for our folly.

*The substitute for burial.*

What, then, is it proposed to substitute for this custom of burial? The answer is easy and simple. Do that which is done in all good work of every kind—follow Nature's indication, and do the work she does, but do it better and more rapidly. For example, in the human body she sometimes throws off a diseased portion in order to save life, by slow and clumsy efforts, it is true, and productive of much suffering; the surgeon performs the same task more rapidly and better, follows her lead, and improves on it. Nature's many agents, laden with power, the over-action of which is harmful, we cannot stop, but we tame, guide, and make them our most profitable servants. So here, also, let us follow her. The naturally slow and disagreeable process of decomposition, which we have made by one mode of treatment infinitely more slow and not less repulsive, we can by another mode of treatment greatly shorten and accomplish without offence to the living. What in this particular matter is naturally the work

in the case of interment in a grave, and not one would be required, for example, in the case of cremation, or burning of the body.

of weeks or months, can be perfectly done in an hour or two.

The problem to be worked is : Given a dead body, to resolve it into carbonic acid, water, and ammonia, and the mineral elements, rapidly, safely, and not unpleasantly. *The problem solved by burning.*

The answer may be practically supplied in a properly constructed furnace. The gases can be driven off without offensive odour, the mineral constituents will remain in a crucible. The gases will ere night be consumed by plants and trees. The ashes or any portion of them may be preserved in a funeral urn, or may be scattered on the fields, which latter is their righteous destination. No scents or balsams are needed, as on Greek and Roman piles, to overcome the noxious effluvia of a corpse burned in open air. Modern science is equal to the task of thus removing the dead of a great city without instituting any form of nuisance ; none such as those we tolerate everywhere from many factories, both to air and streams. Plans for the accomplishment of this have been considered ; but discussion of the subject alone is aimed at here. To treat our dead after this fashion would return millions of capital without delay to the bosom of mother earth, who would give us back large returns at compound interest for the deposit.

2. *The  
view of  
sentiment.*

Who can doubt now that the question is one of vital economy to the people of this country? This is still no reason why it should not be considered from the point of view of sentiment. And what has sentiment to urge on behalf of the present process? Let us see what the process by burial is.

So far as I dare! for could I paint in its true colours the ghastly picture of that which happens to the mortal remains of the dearest we have lost, the page would be too deeply stained for publication. I forbear, therefore, to trace the steps of the process which begins so soon and so painfully to manifest itself after that brief hour has passed, when "she lay beautiful in death." Such loveliness as that I agree it might be treason to destroy, could its existence be perpetuated, and did not Nature so ruthlessly and so rapidly blight her own handy-work, in furtherance of her own grand purpose. The sentiment of the survivor on behalf of preserving the beauty of form and expression, were it possible to do so, would, I confess, go far to neutralize the argument based on utility, powerful as it is. But a glimpse of the reality which we achieve by burial would annihilate in an instant every sentiment for continuing that process. Nay, more; it would arouse a powerful repugnance

to the horrible notion that we too must some day become so vile and offensive, and, it may be, so dangerous; a repugnance surmountable only through the firm belief that after death the condition of the body is a matter of utter indifference to its dead life-tenant. Surely if we, the living, are to have sentiments, or to exercise any choice about the condition of our bodies after death, those sentiments and that choice must be in favour of a physical condition which cannot be thought of either as repulsive in itself or as injurious to others.

There is a source of very painful dread, as I have reason to know, little talked of, it is true, but keenly felt by many persons at some time or another, the horror of which to some is inexpressible. It is the dread of a premature *Premature* burial; the fear lest some deep trance should be mistaken for death, and that the awakening should take place too late. Happily such occurrences must be exceedingly rare, especially in this country, where the interval between death and burial is considerable, and the fear is almost a groundless one. Still, the conviction that such a fate is possible—which cannot be altogether denied—will always be a source of severe trial to some. With cremation no such catastrophe could ever occur; and the completeness of a properly conducted process would

render death instantaneous and painless if by any unhappy chance an individual so circumstanced were submitted to it. But the guarantee against this danger would be doubled, since inspection of the entire body must of necessity immediately precede the act of cremation, no such inspection being possible under the present system.

*Religious  
rites equally  
applicable  
to burial  
and  
cremation.*

In order to meet a possible objection to the substitution of cremation for burial, let me observe that the former is equally susceptible with the latter of association with religious funereal rites, if not more so. Never could the solemn and touching words "ashes to ashes, dust to dust," be more appropriately uttered than over a body about to be consigned to the furnace; while, with a view to metaphor, the dissipation of almost the whole body in the atmosphere in the ethereal form of gaseous matter is far more suggestive as a type of another and a brighter life, than the consignment of the body to the abhorred prison of the tomb.

I do not propose to describe here the processes which have been employed, or any improved system which might be adopted for the purpose of ensuring rapid and perfect combustion of the body, although much might be said in reference to these matters. There is no



doubt that further experiments and research are wanting for the practical improvement of the process, especially if required to be conducted on a large scale. Something has been already accomplished and with excellent results. I refer to recent examples of the process as practised by Dr. L. Brunetti, Professor of Pathological Anatomy in the University of Padua. These were exhibited at the Exposition of Vienna, where I had the opportunity of examining them with care. Professor Brunetti exposed the residue from bodies and parts of bodies on which he had practised cremation by different methods, and the results of his latest experience may be summarized as follows: The whole process of incineration of a human adult body occupied three and a half hours. The ashes and bone earth weighed 1·70 kilo.—about three pounds and three-quarters avoirdupois. They were of a delicate white, and were contained in a glass box about twelve inches long, by eight inches wide, and eight deep. The quantity of wood used to effect absolute and complete incineration, may be estimated from its weight, about 150 pounds. He adds that “its cost was one florin and twenty kreuzers”—about two shillings and fourpence English. The box was that marked No. IX. in the case, which was No. 4149 in the Catalogue: Italian.

*The present mode of performing cremation (in 1874).*

*Brunetti's process.*

*Mummification.*

In an adjacent case was an example of mummification by the latest and most successful method. By a series of chemical processes it has been attempted to preserve in the corpse the appearance natural to life, as regards colour and form. Admirable as the result appears to be in preserving anatomical and pathological specimens of the body, it is, in my opinion, very far from successful when applied to the face and hand. At best a condition is produced which resembles a badly coloured and not well-formed waxen image. And the consciousness that this imperfect achievement is the real person and not a likeness, so far from being calculated to enhance its value to the survivor, produces the very painful impression, as it were, of a debased original; while, moreover, it is impossible not to be aware that the substitution of such an image for the reality must in time replace the mental picture which exists, of the once living face lighted by emotion and intelligence, of which the preserved face is wholly destitute.

To return to the process of cremation. There are still numerous considerations in its favour which might be adduced, of which I shall name only one; namely, the opportunity it offers of escape from the ghastly but costly ceremonial which mostly awaits our remains after death.

How often have the slender shares of the widow and orphan been diminished in order to testify, and so unnecessarily, their loving memory of the deceased, by display of plumes and silken scarves about the unconscious clay! And again, how prolific of mischief to the living is the attendance at the burial-ground, with uncovered head, and damp-struck feet, in pitiless weather, at the chilling rite of sepulture! Not a few deaths have been clearly traceable to the act of offering that "last tribute of respect."

Perhaps no great change can be expected at present in the public opinions current, or rather in the conventional views which obtain, on the subject of burial, so ancient is the practice, and so closely associated is it with sentiments of affection and reverence for the deceased. To many persons, any kind of change in our treatment of the dead will be suggestive of sacrilegious interference, however remote, either in fact or by resemblance to it, such change may be. Millions still cherish deep emotions connected both with the past and the future in relation to the "Campo Santo," and the annual "Jour des Morts." And many of these might be slow to learn that, if the preservation of concrete remains and the ability to offer the tribute of devotion at a shrine be desired, cremation equally, if not better than burial, secures those

*The shrine  
containing  
imperishable  
remains  
secured by  
cremation.*

ends. On the other hand, I know how many there are, both in this country and abroad, who only require the assurance that cremation is practically attainable to declare their strong preference for it, and to substitute it for what they conceive to be the present defective and repulsive procedure. A few such might, by combination for the purpose, easily examine the subject still further by experiment, and would ultimately secure the power if they desired to put it in practice for themselves. And the consideration of the subject which such examples would afford could not fail to hasten the adoption of what I am fairly entitled to call the Natural, in place of the present Artificial, treatment of the body after death.

## SECOND PAPER ON CREMATION, 1874.

[The foregoing paper having appeared in the *Contemporary* of January, 1874, a reply from Mr. Holland, at that time Medical Inspector of Burials for England and Wales, took place in February; the following paper, defending his original statements, was published by the author in the March number of that journal.]

### CREMATION.

A REPLY TO CRITICS, AND AN EXPOSITION OF THE PROCESS.

I CONFESS that it is not without some surprise *Reception* that I find my proposal to substitute cremation *accorded* for burial as a sanitary reform formally opposed *to a novel* in the last number of the *Contemporary* by *proposal;* a member of the medical profession. From the general public, on account of its natural and tender sympathy with ancient customs, especially when hallowed by religious rite, I had expected adverse criticism. From those who are interested, or believe themselves to be so, in the celebration of funereal pomps and ceremonials of all kinds, a protest was also not unlikely to be heard.

In all this, however, I have been mistaken. So far from encountering opposition, I have

received encouragement and support from all classes to an extent which would have been to me almost incredible had I not witnessed it.

*more  
favourable  
than  
anticipated.*

Clergymen are anxious to demonstrate how few are the words requiring change in our Burial Service to render it wholly applicable to cremation. The public press has all but unanimously spoken favourably of the scheme, demanding only to be assured on certain grounds of possible objection, with which presently I shall have to deal. Persons in all ranks and stations of life write to me to say there is nothing they would more gladly obtain than the assurance that their wish to be burned after death could be realized without difficulty.

And, lastly, I am bound to say that the much—perhaps too much—abused undertaker, with a knowledge of the world and a breadth of view for which some might not have given him credit, has said to me, “I only desire to supply the public want: as long as the public demands funeral cars, magnificent horses, display of feathers, and a host of attendants in black, I must furnish them; but I am equally ready to perform cremation to-morrow if the public demand it, and if you will tell me how to do it properly.” And I find him an ally at once, and not an enemy.

*Among*

Surprised, then, as I am, equally at the

number of my friends, and at the quarter from whence my one opponent arises, it is with no little satisfaction, since I am to have an opponent, that I find him to be one so well qualified for the task; the writer of the article in question being no less an authority than the Medical Inspector of Burials for England and Wales to the Home Department. I feel sure, then, that all that can be said in defence of burial and in opposition to cremation will be urged by so experienced and redoubtable an antagonist: one who, according to his own showing, has had a large share in controlling and directing the public money for the establishment of Cemeteries during the last twenty years. And, after all, I cannot wonder, seeing how extensive is his acquaintance with the present state of these matters, and how closely he himself is identified with them, that he should intimate at the outset that in itself my paper "is not worth a reply," "the theory on which its main conclusion is based being so entirely without reasonable foundation."

He, nevertheless, consents to discuss the subject, although he fails to specify the theory thus stigmatized. As I intend to examine the article carefully, the omission will probably not be important. The following may be accepted as a fair summary of the views expressed in it. Mr.

*several  
opponents  
one has  
appeared  
with special  
qualifica-  
tions for  
the contest.*

*What he  
admits.*

*Mr.  
Holland's  
admissions.*

Holland admits the great evils of burial when it is adopted within the limits of the town ; but believes that, "amply large and well-situated cemeteries" having been established, for which "a heavy expense has been incurred"—if, furthermore, they are not too much crowded at first, and are not too soon disturbed afterwards, it is "possible for burial to be continued without danger, that is, without, not the possibility, but the probability of injury." All these advantages granted, even then cemeteries "may be mismanaged so as to become unsafe, . . . for so long as men are men, mistakes, and worse than mistakes, will occasionally occur ;" and he states that "the real danger from a well-situated and well-managed cemetery, large in proportion to the number of its burials, is not larger than that of a well-managed railway."

We learn, then, from her Majesty's Inspector that burial is by no means a certainly innocuous procedure ; although, provided all the conditions named above are present—which, by the way, is by no means always the case in our very popular suburban cemeteries—much mischief may not occur.

In addition to this, he combats at some length views which he quite erroneously attributes to me ; and also imputes inaccuracy in a statement of mine relative to chemical changes,



which imputation I shall prove to be wholly without foundation.

It is on these grounds that Mr. Holland advocates burial, and he is bold enough to assert its superiority to cremation, although, it appears, he has had no experience whatever of the latter process! I doubt whether he ever witnessed an experiment, much less has performed one himself; indeed, I am compelled to infer from his remarks that he knows nothing of it beyond the account which in my last paper I gave of the experiments by Brunetti of Padua, the results of which, although excellent, are, as I intimated more than once, very inferior to those which might easily be attained. He feels bound to admit that, "no doubt, if sufficient care be taken, no actual nuisance need be caused" by cremation, but qualifies the admission by suggesting that the process "is far more liable to mishaps" than burial, "such mishaps as must be occasionally expected causing far more disgusting nuisance, far more difficult of concealment."

To all this I shall reply: first, that the evils of burial are far too lightly estimated by Mr. Holland, respecting which I will adduce overwhelming testimony of a kind that he will not question or deny.

*He under-  
estimates  
the evils  
of burial,*

Secondly, that the plan of cremation I have

*and exaggerates the objections to cremation.*

myself adopted and will now advise, is wholly free from objections of the kind Mr. Holland has imagined to exist ; that it is complete in its results, and is absolutely causeless of danger or offence to others.

*Evils caused to the living by burial demonstrated.*

The evils inflicted on the living by the burial of the dead, I find myself compelled to demonstrate. In my original article I assumed these to be well known and universally admitted, and had no idea that evidence on this subject could be required. This, however, was an error. Thus I have several times been asked quite gravely by young men, well educated and intelligent, if it were an ascertained fact that decaying dead bodies within a grave could really induce disease in the living : true, they might give rise to horrible effluvia, and be very disagreeable, but were they positively harmful ? And one respectable journal suggests, as worthy of consideration, whether solicitude on these matters does not betray an undue care for the preservation of life, and regards an attempt to control this fertile source of disease, as dictated by "a constant and morbid fear of death" ! For all this remarkable ignorance of the subject I can only account by the fact, that a generation has risen up since there was made that notable revelation of horrors in the London churchyards which the older men of our time can

*The horrors revealed*

never forget, but which the younger men never  
 knew. *forty years  
ago now  
forgotten.*

Some five-and-twenty years have now elapsed since a systematic examination of the churches and graveyards of the Metropolis was made by the most eminent and trustworthy men of the day, when details were brought to light which, at that time, smote the public with horror.

The result was that Acts of Parliament were passed prohibiting intra-mural interment. The poisonous abominations were removed, vaults were hermetically sealed, and the dead were carried miles away; nevertheless the same detestable process of putrefaction goes on, although it is, at present, beyond the reach of our senses, and only now and then obtrudes itself on our notice.

My task, however, becomes yet more necessary, since we have before us to-day a Medical Inspector of Burials, who, while admitting, with manifest reluctance, that some danger still attaches to the process of interment, comes forward to advise the public, with all the weight of his experience, to continue that practice, instead of inquiring, which he has not done, whether a mode of disposing of the body may not exist which is absolutely harmless and devoid of all the evils named above.

It is clear, then, that, for the sake of the

general reader at all events, it is necessary to refer, although briefly, to the indubitable evidence which exists relative to this subject.

*The investigation of*  
1849.

For his information let me state that the "General Board of Health" made, in 1849, a special investigation, commissioning for the purpose Southwood Smith, Chadwick, Milroy, Sutherland, Waller Lewis, and others, to conduct a searching inquiry into the state of the burial-grounds of London and large provincial towns, and to devise a scheme for extra-mural sepulture. From their report,\* which abounds in information, I shall make two or three extracts.

Happily, any minute description of the state of the graveyards and their contents which resulted from "the present practice of interment in towns" need not be given. It will suffice for our purpose to observe that the reporters say,

\* *Report on a General Scheme for Extra-mural Sepulture* (Clowes and Sons : 1850).

(Signed)

CARLISLE.

ASHLEY.

EDWIN CHADWICK.

T. SOUTHWOOD SMITH.

The subject had been examined before by official authority ; and at an early period by Walker, whose work on *Graveyards* is well known, and contains much information. (Longmans, London : 1839.)

*A Special Inquiry into the Practice of Interment in Towns*, by Edwin Chadwick (London : 1843), is replete with evidence, and should be read by those who desire to pursue the inquiry further.

“We shall be under the necessity of making statements of a very painful nature, and sometimes of representing scenes which we feel most reluctant publicly to exhibit; but we should ill discharge the duty entrusted to us if we were to shrink from the full disclosure of the truth—more especially as a thorough knowledge of the evil is indispensable to an appreciation of the only effectual remedy.”\*

*Extracts  
from the  
remarkable  
report.*

Passing over these details, I quote again as follows: “We,” say the reporters, “may safely rest the sanitary part of the case on the single fact, that the placing of the dead body in a grave and covering it with a few feet of earth does not prevent the gases generated by decomposition, together with putrescent matters which they hold in suspension, from permeating the surrounding soil, and escaping into the air above and the water beneath.”

After supporting this statement by illustrations of the enormous force exercised by gases of decomposition, in bursting open leaden coffins, whence they issue without restraint, the reporters quote the evidence of Dr. Lyon Playfair (late H.M. Postmaster-General) to the following effect:—

“I have examined,” he says, “various churchyards and burial-grounds for the purpose of

\* *Report on a General Scheme, etc.*, p. 5.

*Sir Lyon  
Playfair's  
evidence.*

ascertaining whether the layer of earth above the bodies is sufficient to absorb the putrid gases evolved. The slightest inspection shows that they are not thoroughly absorbed by the soil lying over the bodies. I know several churchyards from which most fœtid smells are evolved; and gases with similar odour are emitted from the sides of sewers passing in the vicinity of churchyards, although they may be more than thirty feet from them."

He goes on to estimate the amount of gases which issue from the graveyard, and estimates that for the 52,000 annual interments of the Metropolis\* no less a quantity than 2,572,580 cubic feet of gases is emitted, "the whole of which, beyond what is absorbed by the soil, must pass into the water below or the atmosphere above."

The foregoing is but one small item from the long list of illustrative cases proving the fact that no dead body is ever buried within the earth without polluting the soil, the water, and the air around and above it; the extent of the offence produced corresponding with the amount

\* A number which has already reached 80,000, in 1873, so rapid is the increase of population. The above was written in 1849.

It has been stated by some that the mere contact of the corpse with fresh earth suffices for safe disinfection! Such a monstrous delusion is disposed of by this evidence.

of decaying animal matter subjected to the process.

But "offence" only is proved: is the result not only disagreeable, but injurious to the living?

The Report referred to gives notable ex-  
 amples of the fatal influence of such effluvia  
 when encountered in a concentrated form; one  
 being that of two gravediggers who, in 1841,  
 perished in descending into a grave in St.  
 Botolph's churchyard, Aldgate. Such are, how-  
 ever, extremely exceptional instances; but our  
 reporter goes on to say that there is abundant  
 evidence of the injurious action of these gases  
 in a more diluted state, and cites the well-  
 demonstrated fact that "cholera was unusually  
 prevalent in the immediate neighbourhood of  
 London graveyards." I cannot cite, on account  
 of its length, a paragraph by Dr. Sutherland  
 attesting this fact: while the many pages detail-  
 ing Dr. Milroy's inspection of numerous grave-  
 yards are filled with evidence which is quite  
 conclusive, and describes scenes which must be  
 read by those who desire further acquaintance  
 with the subject.\*

*Extracts  
 from the  
 report on  
 burials in  
 1849.*

Dr. Waller Lewis reports the mischievous

\* See independent examples on each of pages 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21, 26, 28, 43-46, and many others in the *Report* above quoted, p. 29.

*Dr. Waller  
Lewis's  
evidence.*

results of breathing the pestiferous air of vaults, and the kind of illness produced by it.\* His long and elaborate report of the conditions of these excavations beneath the churches of the metropolis, presents a marvellous view of the phenomena, which, ordinarily hidden in the grave, could be examined here, illustrating the many stages of decay—a condition which he describes as a “disgrace to any civilization.” But it may be said all this is changed now; intra-mural interment no longer exists: why produce these shocking records of the past?

*Suburban  
cemeteries  
rapidly  
become  
urban.*

Precisely because they enable us to know what it is which we have only banished to our suburban cemeteries; that we may be reminded that the process has not changed; that all this horrible decomposition removed from our doors—although this will not long be the case, either at Kensal Green or Norwood, to say nothing of some other cemeteries—goes on as ever, and will one day be found in dangerous vicinity to our homes. And here I must make an explanation which I think can be necessary to very few who read my former article, although Mr. Holland misunderstands me, and bases the greater part of his paper upon the utter misrepresentation of my meaning he is pleased to

\* See also Chadwick's *Special Inquiry*, for numerous illustrations.



make. Because I said that in burying the corpses of to-day in distant graves we were "laying by poison for our children's children," he takes special pains to inform me that probably these particular corpses must at that future time be as innocuous as if they had been burned. No doubt they will be so; but as years pass on, the close neighbourhood and ultimate contact of the putrefying dead with our living descendants must arrive.

It is only a question of time. And it was expressly for the purpose of guarding against the misapprehension I complain of, and which has furnished my opponent with such large opportunity of needless remark, that I added the following passage, which it is only charitable to suppose he must have overlooked (although it forms the immediate sequel to that which he quoted):—

"It may be granted, to anticipate objection, that it is quite possible that the bodies now buried may have lost most, if not all, their power of doing mischief by the time that the particular soil they inhabit is turned up again to the sun's rays, although this is by no means certain; but it is beyond dispute that the margin of safety as to time grows narrower and narrower year by year, and that pollution of wells and streams which supply the living must

ere long arise wherever we bury our dead in this country."

Now, there is no doubt that the passage which has been thus unfairly separated from its context, and so made to appear the exponent of views I do not hold, and have, indeed, expressly disclaimed, is that in which he professes to find ground for his statement that the "theory on which my main conclusion is based is entirely without reasonable foundation." What, then, becomes of this sweeping assertion?

*Further  
and more  
recent  
evidence.*

At this point let me call another witness on this important subject. Perhaps it would be difficult to name a higher authority in this country on any question of public health, than that of Dr. Edmund Parkes, Professor of Military Hygiene of the Army Medical School at Netley. With the particular part of his writings which I am about to quote, I was unacquainted until the last few days, perhaps because they appear in a work "prepared especially for use in the medical service of the army." That at all events must be my excuse for not having them within reach before.\* In a short, but suggestive, chapter "on the disposal of the dead," he proposes the following question:—

\* *A Manual of Practical Hygiene.* London: Churchill. 1864.

“What, then, is the best plan of disposing of the dead so that the living may not suffer? Dr. Parkes quoted.  
 At present the question is not an urgent one; but if peace continue, and if the population of Europe increase, it will become so in another century or two. Already in this country we have seen, in our own time, a great change; the objectionable practice of interment under and around churches in towns has been given up, and the population are buried at a distance from their habitations. For the present, that measure will probably suffice, but in a few years the question will again inevitably present itself.

“Burying in the ground appears certainly the most insanitary plan of the three methods.† The danger both in town and country which follows burial.  
 The air over cemeteries is constantly contaminated (see p. 76), and water (which may be used for drinking) is often highly impure. Hence in the vicinity of graveyards two dangers to the population arise, and in addition, from time to time, the disturbance of an old graveyard has given rise to disease. It is a matter of notoriety that the vicinity of graveyards is unhealthy.”

To return to our reporters: we have seen the condition of graveyards in towns, but it will not be undesirable to glance at the evidence relating to the condition of provincial churchyards, where, in the midst of a sparse popu-

\* *Burial in the Land, or at Sea, and Burning*, p. 458.

lation, the pure country air circulates with natural freedom—numbers of such spots are mentioned—let one single example be “Cadoxton Churchyard, near Neath.” Respecting this the reporter writes: “I do not know how otherwise to describe the state of this churchyard than by saying that it is truly and thoroughly abominable. The smell from it is revolting. I could distinctly perceive it in every one of the neighbouring houses which I visited, and in every one of these houses there have been cases of cholera or severe diarrhœa.” This is not a selected specimen, some are even worse; for further examples see below.\*

*Further  
discussion  
of this  
subject.*

I next complain that there is insufficient recognition in Mr. Holland's paper, of the unhealthy character of the emanations which result from the process of putrefaction when affecting the human body. He lays great stress on the fact that at the *end* of those long stages of decay which burial renders necessary, the result is as harmless as at the end of the process of cremation, passing over as not worth notice the fact that for long years the corpse is replete with influences which are mischievous to any-

\* *Op. cit.*, p. 48. Report of Mr. Bowie, describing graveyards at Merthyr Tydvil; Hawick, Roxburghshire; Greenock, and other places.

thing which may come within their range ; absolute isolation being the only condition of safety. Conversely stated, this is precisely my own argument, and demonstrates triumphantly the superiority of cremation. I affirm that, by burning, we arrive in one hour, without offence or danger, at the very stage of harmless result which burying requires years to produce. True indeed it is, "that the ultimate result is the same," but an infinity of mischief may happen by his process, and none can happen by mine. And, after all, he can only on his own showing claim a perfect result by burial "*if* no more dead be buried than the free oxygen contained in rain and dew carried through it, will decompose ; and *if* such soil be left undisturbed, etc., and *if* the use of such ground for burial be discontinued," etc., etc. Again, there is another instance of Mr. Holland's insufficient recognition of the unhealthy character of cadaveric emanations which I must particularly call attention to. I had stated that in the resolution of an animal body the gaseous products were carbonic acid, water, and ammonia. He impeaches my correctness, saying that I am—

"Not, however, quite accurate in describing that result to be the formation of water, of ammonia, and of carbonic acid, as the chief products ; for if the decomposition either with

or without fire be complete, no ammonia will be formed in the soil; or, if formed, it will be converted before it need escape either into the air, or be carried off by water, in the form either of uncombined nitrogen, or changed into some compound of that element with oxygen, such as nitric or nitrous acid," etc.

*Chemical  
changes  
which take  
place.*

I never said the ultimate result of the resolution in question was ammonia, but I repeat that ammonia is an intermediate formation in large quantity, by which nitrogen passes off before it comes to be "the nitric or nitrous acid" he speaks of, the latter being, by the way, no more an ultimate step in the process than is ammonia. At what point shall we stop if we are to trace to their last stages the volatile component elements of the body? Why, certainly not at ammonia, nor at nitric acid, but at carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen, and oxygen. I chose to rest at ammonia, because the evolution of ammonia is an important fact, and I reassert that it is largely produced. So much for the *à priori* statement. Now, what is the evidence from observation in this matter? Was I right or was I wrong, as Mr. Holland says I am, in stating that the body is resolved among other things into ammonia? Any intelligent witness will do for me, but we have Dr. Parkes still in the box: let us interrogate him. That same

short chapter almost commences with the following passage :—

“After death the buried body returns to its elements, and gradually, and often by the means of other forms of life which prey on it, a large amount of it forms carbonic acid, *ammonia*, sulphuretted and carburetted hydrogen, nitrous and nitric acid, and various more complex gaseous products, many of which are very foetid, but which, however, are eventually all oxygenized into the simpler combinations.” \*

In another part of the volume, in speaking of the air of churchyards, he writes—

“The decomposition of bodies gives rise to a very large amount of carbonic acid. . . . *Ammonia* and an offensive putrid vapour are also given off.”

“In vaults, the air contains much carbonic acid, carbonate or sulphide of *ammonium*, nitrogen, hydrosulphuric acid, and organic matter.” †

My readers will agree with me, I think, that this matter is disposed of.

I now arrive at the second part of my subject, in which I have to show that the plan of cremation I have myself adopted, and will now advise, is wholly free from objections of the kind Mr. Holland has imagined to exist; that

\* Parkes, p. 457.

† *Op. cit.*, p. 76.

it is complete in its results, and is absolutely causeless of danger or of offence to any.

*The best  
mode of  
performing  
cremation,  
(in 1874).*

Many persons have expressed to me the opinion that I ought in my first paper to have described what I believed to be the best mode of performing cremation. May I say that this was also desired by the Editor of this journal. I felt, however, although I was prepared to give the information in question, that it was impossible to judge beforehand what might be the reception by the public of my project, and that I might perhaps go too far and weight it too heavily if I actually sketched the process by which each reader could realize for himself its nature and mode of operation. I think the reticence was prudent, although it might possibly have been unnecessary.

I think it is fair to myself to say that, before that first article was published, a scheme for burning two thousand bodies a week for London (the average present requirement being about sixteen hundred) was quite completed, and that I had satisfied myself that to accomplish this would not be a difficult task, and that it would occasion no nuisance whatever.

Without entering on those details, I will give an example of what I have done in the matter of resolving the body into its ultimate elements by heat.



And first of all I must request the reader to dismiss from his mind all the allegations against the practice of cremation which Mr. Holland has made, grounded on what he imagines that process to be. He states that it "would necessarily require the active superintendence of a class of men whose services for such an office it would be scarcely possible always to obtain : while it is evident that imperfectly conducted burning of the dead would be inexpressibly shocking, and apt not rarely to occur." The point first named is a matter barely worth contesting; but the last five words are absolutely without foundation, and I challenge him to show a tittle of evidence to support the very grave allegation they contain.

A powerful reverberating furnace will reduce *The result of cremation by the author in a powerful furnace.* a body of more than average size and weight, leaving only a few white and fragile portions of earthy material, in less than one hour. I have myself personally superintended the burning of two entire bodies, one small and emaciated of 47 lbs. weight, and one of 140 lbs. weight, not emaciated, and possess the products—in the former case, weighing  $1\frac{3}{4}$  lbs.; in the latter, weighing about 4 lbs. The former was completed in twenty-five minutes, the latter in fifty. No trace of odour was perceived—indeed, such a thing is impossible—and not the slightest

*Early experiment in reverberating furnace.*

difficulty presented itself. The remains already described were not withdrawn till the process was complete, and nothing can be more pure, tested by sight or smell, than they are, and nothing less suggestive of decay or decomposition. It is a refined sublimate, and not a portion of refuse, which I have before me. The experiments took place in the presence of several persons. Among the witnesses of the second experiment was Dr. George Buchanan, the well-known medical officer of the Local Government Board, who can testify to the completeness of the process.\*

I challenge my opponent to produce so fair a result from all the costly and carefully

\* These experiments were made by me, in January, 1874, after permission kindly granted by Messrs. Maudslay Sons and Field, at their works in Westminster Bridge Road. At that period in the history of cremation, I did not think it right to name this act of generous liberality and confidence, so strong was the prejudice against it in many minds, but happily there is now no need to withhold my public acknowledgments of the favour accorded me in providing the necessary means for acquiring the experience I wanted.

The subsequent experiments I went to Birmingham to perform, at the suggestion of my late friend Sir Wm. Siemens, who had there one of his admirable furnaces. The cremation described on the next page was that of a fat hog, being one of the most severe tests I could apply in reference to production of offensive odours. The method, which requires a large supply of gas and a costly apparatus, is still superior to any other I am acquainted with.

These were the first cremations made in this country, with a view to determine the applicability of furnaces to the accomplishment of human cremation.

managed cemeteries in the kingdom, and I offer him twenty years during which to conduct the process for a single experiment.

In the proceedings above described, the gases which leave the furnace chimney during the first three or four minutes of combustion are noxious; after that time they cease to be so, and no smoke would be seen. But these noxious gases are not to be permitted to escape by any chimney, and will pass through a flue into a second furnace, where they are entirely consumed; and the chimney of the latter is smokeless—no organic products whatever can issue by it. A complete combustion is thus attained. Not even a tall chimney is necessary, which might be pointed at as that which marked the site where cremation is performed. A small jet of steam quickening the draught of a low chimney is all that is requisite. If the process is required on a large scale, the second furnace could be utilized for cremation also, and its products passed through another, and so on without limit.

Subsequent experiments, however, by another method, have resulted in a still greater success. By means of one of the furnaces invented by Sir Wm. Siemens, I have obtained even a more rapid and more complete combustion than before. The body employed was a severe test of

*No noxious  
gases escape.*

*Experiments by the  
Siemens  
furnace.*

*Perfect  
results from  
the Siemens  
furnace.*

its powers, for it weighed no less than 227 lbs., and was not emaciated. It was placed in a cylindrical vessel about seven feet long by five or six in diameter, the interior of which was already heated to about 2000° Fahr. The inner surface of the cylinder is smooth, almost polished, and no solid matter but that of the body is introduced into it. The product, therefore, can be nothing more than the ashes of the body. No foreign dust can be introduced, no coal or other solid combustible being near it: nothing but a heated hydrocarbon in a gaseous form and heated air. Nothing is visible in the cylinder before using it but a pure almost white interior, the lining having acquired a temperature of white heat. In this case, the gases given off from the body so abundantly at first, pass through a highly heated chamber among thousands of interstices made by intersecting fire-bricks, laid throughout the entire chamber, lattice-fashion, in order to minutely divide and delay the current, and expose it to an immense area of heated surface. By this means they were rapidly oxidized, and not a particle of smoke issued by the chimney: no second furnace, therefore, is necessary by this method to consume any noxious matters, since none escape. The process was completed in fifty-five minutes, and the ashes, which weighed about five pounds,

were removed with ease. The foregoing is a very meagre sketch of Dr. Siemens' furnace, the principle of which is well known to engineers, and to scientific men generally, and need not be described in detail here.

I will now add—not that it affects the process in the slightest degree as to results—that all my experiments hitherto have been made with the lower animals.

As a rough and unfinished sketch of a system to be followed when cremation is generally adopted, I would suggest the following :—

When death occurs and the necessary certificate has been given (relative to which an important suggestion will be made hereafter), the body is placed in a light wood shell, then in a suitable outside receptacle preparatory to removal for religious rites or otherwise. After a proper time has elapsed, it is conveyed to the spot where cremation is to be performed. There, nothing need be seen by the last attendant or attendants than the placing of a shell within a small compartment, and the closing of the door upon it. It slides down into the heated chamber, and is left there an hour till the necessary changes have taken place. The ashes are then placed at the disposal of the attendants.

*Practical  
suggestions  
for the per-  
formance of  
cremation.*

I now come to a very serious matter, treated of by Mr. Holland in a manner of which I am

compelled to complain. He is pleased to make merry himself, and to suggest that I am joking—or, to use his own phraseology, “poking fun”—when calling attention to my remarks relative to the “economical” view of cremation.

*Cremation  
must have  
an economic  
bearing,  
whether we  
will it or  
not.*

In speaking of this, I stated that “it is an economic subject, *whether we will it or not.*” Now, I wish him and all my readers to understand that I was never more serious, never more earnest, in my life than I was then and am at this moment, and in consideration of this question of “economy.” Anything like “fun” or a “joke,” wherever else it may be tolerated, is wholly out of place here. Seeing the Great Power which has ordained the marvellous and ceaseless action which transmutes every animal body as quickly as possible into vegetable matter and *vice versa*, and has arranged that this harmonious cycle should be the absolute and necessary law for all existence, I have space for no other sentiments than those of submission, wonder, and admiration. If any say that it is in bad taste, or does violence to some right feeling, to speak of the fate that inevitably awaits every one of us, in that, on some future day, the elements of our bodies must enter into that other life of the vegetable world, whence once they came, let the complaint thereof be carried to the Highest Court of the Universe,

and let the question be asked there, Whether "the Judge of all the earth doth right" ?

Meantime it suffices us to know that the very existence of these cavillers is solely due to that Divine fecundity which pervades all nature, and is regulated by economical principles, the beneficent operation of which we may feebly postpone, doing some notable harm thereby, but happily can never resist in the end.

My charge against Mr. Holland, however, is not this, but something much more serious. Alluding to the small modicum of remains in the form of ashes after cremation, and which I was content should be preserved in an urn, stating only that the fields were their "righteous" destination—as they are—he speaks of the latter suggestion as a "desecration" and as "outraging family affection ;" and actually associates it in some fashion with savagery and cannibalism. Yet—can we believe it?—he, so tender of sentiment on this subject of deceased remains, himself actually advocates and practises the utilizing of by far the greater part of those remains for the production of grass and other vegetables for the express purpose of keeping his cemeteries sweet and wholesome! The gaseous elements of these buried bodies, which, as I particularly insisted upon when dealing with that question of economy, are by far the

*Further  
considera-  
tion of  
"senti-  
ment" in  
relation to  
cremation.*

*The  
argument  
continued.*

greater part, being incalculable in amount in relation to the ashes, which are by comparison a mere trifle, and which alone he is pleased to mention—that greater part, I say, he not only uses himself, but he knows that this very utilization of it is the only way he has of preserving a cemetery in a tolerable condition. He knows perfectly well that the presence of abundant plant-growth is essential in the cemetery to assimilate the noxious gases arising from the buried bodies before alluded to, and that those plants owe their life and structure to the very elements of our “friends and relatives,” about whom he professes to be so utterly shocked that I should conceive it possible to utilize them for any economical purpose! I charge my opponent then, his professions notwithstanding, as in part the manager of the cemeteries of this country during twenty years, with having presided over perhaps the largest institution that ever existed for transmuting the human body into vegetable growth of various kinds. My one objection to his system is that it does it so slowly; so offensively, and so dangerously.

Now, lest perchance some one not himself acquainted with the facts alluded to may desire, for such a statement, other authority than my own, let us listen once more, and for the last time, to Dr. Parkes. In order to



oxidize the foetid organic exhalations of the burying-ground, he says: "The only means which present themselves, as applicable in all cases, are the deep burial and the use of plants closely placed in the cemetery. There is no plan which is more efficacious for the absorption of the organic substances, and perhaps of the carbonic acid, than plants; but it would seem a mistake to use only the dark, slow-growing evergreens; the object should be to get the most rapidly growing trees and shrubs," etc.\*

But even this is not my opponent's crowning inconsistency. So determined is he not to accept cremation, that he suggests another mode, "that of sinking the dead in the depths of the ocean," as having "far more to recommend it." No doubt there is much to be said in its favour; much more certainly than for burial. Yet shocked as he is at the notion that his father's ashes should ever fertilize the field, he would consign the body to a place whence, almost instantly, it would be devoured by fish and crustaceans, whose numbers would be multiplied correspondingly by their benefactor's enormous contribution of food, as the public markets soon would testify. No animal multiplies more rapidly than fish, and the "economic"

*The "sentiment" in regard of burying in the sea.*

\* P. 458. Dr. Sutherland also strongly insists on the same practice.

question would be determined in a manner more complete, and more direct, and with a more remunerative result than any which I had ever dared, or still should dare, to suggest !

This remarkable proposal appears actually on the same page as that in which he affects to be outraged by my suggestion that burning the body would necessarily contribute to the "food production" of the earth.

And here I shall take leave of Mr. Holland, to seek some less formidable antagonist. Possibly in this light may be regarded the writer of an article in an influential weekly journal, whose objection, supposing it to be seriously urged, is almost the only one besides those already noticed which has appeared within the range of our periodical literature.

*Other  
objections  
considered.*

By stretch of charity one might almost imagine it to be a joke, seeing it is the writer's only way of retreat from a wholly untenable position. He urges that, as the present generation is doing its best to exhaust "the rivers, the rainfall, the mines, and the natural fertility of the earth," we ought to leave our dead remains "in bank for our descendants;" or, in other words—for the generous sentiment is repeated—"it is well that such a deposit as the dead of generations should be left to our posterity"! Waiving altogether the greatest ob-

jection to this testamentary provision for our grandchildren—viz. the amount of disease and death which is unquestionably produced by burial in the soil—the writer ought to have known that the “bank” in question, to use his own simile, pays no interest; and that it is perfectly certain that such capital rendered productive at once, according to nature’s design, must yield a far greater profit, even for posterity, than his own notable one of burying this one talent in a napkin as an offset against what he is pleased to consider our present exhaustion of “rivers and rainfall,” which he declares is taking place at “railway speed”! As if consumption of water in any form, were it a million-fold what it is, could exhaust or diminish the common stock a single drop! No modern schoolboy could make such a blunder as this; nevertheless, it is only a specimen of others existing within the short limits of that article, and equally easy to expose, if need be. I cannot pass over, however, one statement that this writer has dared to make. He speaks of my figures relative to the number buried in London in 1873, and estimating the amount of bone-earth and ashes belonging thereto as “very debatable,” and, further, that they “are open to question.” After saying this, he declines “to fight so eminent a physicist on so small a point

*Objections considered.*

of detail." Is the point so small? I declare those figures to be below, and not above, the truth, and am amply prepared to prove it. My veracity is at stake, for I know no higher crime than to issue misleading or exaggerated numerical statements in order to prove a case, unless, indeed, it be to utter insinuations, without offering a tittle of proof to support them, that an accurate numerical statement is untrue.

*The  
question of  
destroying  
evidence of  
poisoning by  
cremation.*

I now desire to afford explanations which have been asked relative to the following very important subject. It has been said, and most naturally, what guarantee is there against poisoning if the remains are burned, and it is no longer possible, as after burial, to reproduce the body for the purpose of examination? It is to my mind a sufficient reply that, regarding only "the greatest good for the greatest number," the amount of evil in the shape of disease and death, which results from the present system of burial in earth, is infinitely larger than the evil caused by secret poisoning is or could be, even if the practice of the crime were very considerably to increase. Further, the appointment of officers to examine and certify in all cases of death would be an additional and very efficient safeguard. But—and here I touch on a very important subject—is there reason to believe that our present precautions in the matter of

death-certificate against the danger of poisoning are what they ought to be? I think that it must be confessed that they are defective, for not only is our system inadequate to the end proposed, but it is less efficient by comparison than that adopted by foreign governments. Our existing arrangements for ascertaining and registering the cause of death are very lax, and give rise, as we shall see, to serious errors. In order to attain an approach to certitude in this important matter, I contend that it would be most desirable to nominate in every district a properly qualified inspector to certify in all cases to the fact that death has taken place, to satisfy himself as far as possible that no foul play has existed, and to give the certificate accordingly. This would relieve the medical attendant of the deceased from any disagreeable duty, relative to inquiry concerning suspicious circumstances, if any have been observed. Such officers exist throughout the large cities of France and Germany, and the system is more or less pursued throughout the provinces. In Paris, no burial can take place without the written permission of the "Médecin-Vérificateur;" and whether we adopt cremation or not, such an officer might, with advantage, be appointed here.\*

*A qualified  
inspector of  
deaths  
should  
examine  
every case ;*

*as in  
France and  
elsewhere.*

\* The practice referred to is thus regulated :—

The following is the text of the French law, Code Napoléon,

*Many  
bodies  
buried  
without any  
certificate.*

For perhaps it is not generally known, even, as it would seem, by those who have emphasized so notably the objection in question to crema-

Article 77: "Aucune inhumation ne sera faite sans une autorisation, sur papier libre et sans frais, de l'officier de l'état civil, qui ne pourra la délivrer qu'après, s'être transporté auprès de la personne décédée pour s'assurer du décès, et que 24 heures après le décès, hors les cas prévus par les règlements de police."

Thus the verification of the deceased must always be made by a civil officer in person; viz. by the Mayor of the town, or by some one he shall appoint. The law, however, is executed differently in Paris and in the provinces. In Paris, the verification is made exclusively by medical men appointed for this purpose in each "quartier." Their functions are defined by an Act of the 31st of December, 1821. As soon as a death is reported, the civil officer communicates with the medical man of the "quartier" in which the deceased resided, and awaits the report to decide (in concert with the deceased's friends) at what hour burial should take place. The medical man attends at the residence indicated, acquaints himself with all the circumstances of the illness, and reports in writing relative to the following particulars: 1. The christian and surname of the deceased; 2. The sex; 3. If married or not; 4. The age; 5. The profession; 6. The exact date and hour of the decease; 7. The "quartier," the street, the number and story of the house in which it occurred; 8. The nature of the illness, and if there be any reason for making an autopsy; 9. The duration of the illness; 10. The name of the persons who provided the medicines; 11. The names of the doctors and others who attended the case. Besides this verification made by the doctors belonging to each "quartier" of Paris, by an order of the Prefect of the Seine, April, 1839, a committee was formed to watch over the service. The medical men who attest the facts connected with death at Paris are called the "Médecins-Vérificateurs des décès." [This in 1874; for present and stricter method, see Part IV.]

In Vienna, a similar document is always prepared, but with greater care. The same may be said of Munich, Frankfort, Geneva, and other Continental cities.

tion, that many bodies are buried in this country without any medical certificate at all ; and that among these any number of deaths by poison may have taken place for anything that anybody knows. Is it in the provinces chiefly that this lax practice exists? No doubt, and more particularly in the principality of Wales. But it occurs also in the heart of London. A good many certificates of death are signed every year in London by some non-medical persons. Not long ago, in one metropolitan parish which I can name, but do not, above forty deaths were registered in a year on the mere statement of neighbours of the deceased. No medical certificate was procurable, and no inquest was held; the bodies were buried without inquiry. This practice is not illegal ; and, in my opinion, it goes far to make a case for the appointment of a "Médecin-Vérificateur." During the existence of pestilence especially, such a safeguard is necessary. Before I quit this subject, let me make a brief extract from evidence given by Mr. Simon before the Royal Sanitary Commission in 1869, from which it appears that medical certification of death is not the rule, but the exception, in some districts of Wales. He says—

*Mr. Simon's evidence.*

"The returns of death made to the Registrar-General are necessarily imperfect. . . . We had

*Many certificates imperfect.*

*Imperfect  
certificates.*

to make inquiry on one occasion as to the supposed very large prevalence of phthisis in some of the South Wales counties. . . . It turned out that this great appearance of phthisis in the death-registers depended upon the fact that the causes of death were only exceptionally certified by medical men. I remember that in one case only 15 per cent. of the deaths had been medically certified. The non-medical certifiers of death thought that 'consumption' was a good word to cover death generally, so that any one who died somewhat slowly was put down as dying of 'consumption,' and this appeared in the Registrar-General's returns as phthisis."

*Dr. Sutherland's  
evidence.*

Dr. Sutherland long ago called attention to this matter. I quote his remarks from the work above named. Referring to Paris, Munich, and other cities, he says—

"Where there are regularly appointed verifiers, . . . who are generally medical men in practice, . . . the districts of the city are divided between them. . . . The instructions under which these officers act are of a very stringent character, and the procedure is intended to obviate premature interment, and to detect crime. The French and the German method of verification is intended to be *preventive*. A number of instances were mentioned to me in which crimes which would otherwise have escaped notice were



detected by the keen and practised eye of the verifcator, and the general opinion certainly was that much crime was prevented." \*

This is but an episode in treating of cremation ; a very important one nevertheless. I have, therefore, thought it right to take this opportunity of advocating a more stringent provision than now exists for an official inspection and certificate in all cases of death.

Lastly, it would be possible, at much less cost *Suggestion as to preserving parts of body* than is at present incurred for burial, to preserve, in every case of death, the stomach, and a portion of one of the viscera, say for fifteen or twenty years or thereabouts, so that in the event of any suspicion subsequently occurring, greater facility for examination would exist than by the present method of exhumation. Nothing could be more certain to check the designs of the poisoner than the knowledge that the proofs of his crime, instead of being buried in the earth (from whence, as a fact, not one in a hundred thousand is ever disinterred for examination) are safely preserved in a public office, and that they can be produced against him at any moment. The universal application of this plan, although easily practicable, is, however, obviously unnecessary. It is quite certain that *in doubtful cases.* no pretext for such conservation can exist in

\* *Op. cit.*

more than one instance in every five hundred deaths. In the remainder, the fatal result would be attributed without mistake to some natural cause—as decay, fever, consumption, or other malady, the signs of which are clear even to a tyro in the medical art. But in any case in which the slightest doubt arises in the mind of the medical attendant, or in which the precaution is desired or suggested by a relative, or whenever the subject himself may have desired it, nothing would be easier than to make the requisite conservation. As before stated, the existence of an official verifcator would relieve the ordinary medical attendant of the ease from active interference in the matter. If, then, the public is earnest in its endeavour to render exceedingly difficult or impossible the crime of secret poisoning—and it ought to be so if the objection to cremation on this ground is a valid one—the sooner some measures are taken to this end the better, whether burial in earth or cremation be the future method of treating our dead.

*Cost of  
burial.*

I must add one word in reply to a critic who rather hastily objected that the estimate in my original paper of the mean cost of burials in London as about £10 per head is too high. I have re-examined my calculations and find it, if in error at all, too low. Curiously enough, in going through Dr. Edwin Chadwick's work.

already referred to, for other purposes, I find that he also made a similar calculation thirty years ago, and that his estimate is rather higher than mine. He puts it at more than £600,000 for the metropolis, when the population was a little more than one-half what it is now ; I reckoned £800,000 for the year 1873. And he considers the cost of funerals for England and Wales to be, at that time, nearly five millions sterling. He includes cost of transit, which I omit, as being necessary equally with cremation and burial, so that the difference between us is not considerable.

To sum up :—

For the purposes of cremation nothing is required but an apparatus of a suitable kind, the construction of which is well understood and easy to accomplish. With such apparatus the process is rapid and inoffensive, and the result is perfect. The space necessary for the purpose is small, and but little skilled labour is wanted.

*General  
summary  
of the  
advantages  
of crema-  
tion.*

Not only is its employment compatible with religious rites, but it enables them to be conducted with greater ease and with far greater safety to the attendants than at a cemetery. For example, burial takes place in the open air, and necessitates exposure to all weathers, while cremation is necessarily conducted within a

*Advantages  
of crema-  
tion.*

building, which may be constructed to meet the requirements of mourners and attendants in relation to comfort and taste.

Cremation destroys instantly all infectious quality in the body submitted to the process, and effectually prevents the possibility of other injury to the living from the remains at any future time. All care to prevent such evil is obviously unnecessary, and ceases from the moment the process commences. The aim of cremation is to prevent the process of putrefaction.

On the other hand, burial cannot be conducted without serious risks to the living, and great care is required to render them inconsiderable with our present population. Costly cemeteries also are necessary, with ample space for all possible demands upon it, and complete isolation from the vicinity of the living, to ensure, as far as possible, the absence of danger to them.

It is a process designed essentially to prolong decay and putrefaction with all its attendant mischief; and the best that can be affirmed of it is, that in the course of many years it arrives, by a process which is antagonistic to the health of survivors, at results similar to, but less complete, than cremation produces in an hour without injury to any.

### PART III.

#### THE ARGUMENT FOR CREMATION BASED ON A LARGE EXPERIENCE GAINED BETWEEN 1874 AND THE PRESENT DATE.

ARRIVING now at the next part of my subject, I venture to think that few persons can doubt that cremation, as a mode of safely decomposing the body after death, is the most rapid and efficient agent known.

Researches and experiments on a very extended scale during the last fifteen years have amply demonstrated much that before that date was but shrewdly believed to be true, viz. that putrefaction affecting organic matter disseminates the germs of fatal disease. The high temperature necessary for cremation destroys these and resolves the body rapidly into harmless volatile matter and pure white ashes, the only visible residue. Moreover, the process of putrefaction after burial is not one which it is desirable to describe, and any attempt to do so could only wound those natural feelings of affection which are cherished for the departed.

*Unquestionable superiority of cremation to any other method of dealing with the dead body ;*

*incomparably less revolting than the practice of burial ;*

Sentiment is enlisted wholly on the side of cremation ; and shrinks with inexpressible repugnance from any vision, however transient, of " the corruption " of the grave.

*ensuring  
rapid  
decomposi-  
tion with  
safety from  
infection.*

On the other hand, the action of fire in the space of an hour or two destroys all offensive, poison-laden impurities, rendering inert all that is infectious, and restores valuable elements in the form of gases to the atmosphere, where they at once enter into new combinations with healthy living organisms in obedience to the order of nature.

*One objec-  
tion to it  
only can be  
sustained ;*

To this process of combustion I know now but one objection. One only, indeed, is ever seriously urged against it ; and the gravity of that I do not dispute. So complete is the destruction of all noxious matter accomplished by cremation of the body, that if any extraneous poison happens to be present in its tissues before death, administered by accident or design, all traces of it are necessarily destroyed also. Hence, in those exceedingly rare cases where the evidence of a poisoner's guilt depends on the production by chemical skill of the very agent employed, from the tissues of the body exhumed for the purpose some time after death, justice would be defeated and the criminal would escape if in that particular instance cremation had been employed. I do not desire

*a serious  
one,*

to underrate the force of the objection which *and to be*  
 lies against the procedure on that ground; I *fully dis-*  
 intend to deal with it seriously. *cussed.*

I might first, however, rejoin with great force *1. Many*  
 that many bodies committed to the grave *buried*  
 every week in the metropolitan area alone, are *bodies are*  
 charged with poisons not less dangerous to the *charged*  
 living population than those which may have *with poison,*  
 been used to cause death by design. I state *liable to*  
 as a fact of the highest importance that by *contaminate*  
 burial in earth we effectively provide—whatever *the living.*  
 sanitary precautions are taken by ventilation  
 and drainage, whatever disinfection is applied  
 after contagious disease has occurred—that the  
 pestilential germs which have destroyed the  
 body in question are thus so treasured and  
 protected as to propagate and multiply, ready  
 to reappear and work like ruin hereafter for  
 others.

Since last I wrote, the argument for crema-  
 tion on this ground has been immeasurably  
 strengthened. It was then notorious that the  
 water-courses and wells in the proximity of  
 graveyards and cemeteries had often been the  
 demonstrated sources of disease to a neigh-  
 bouring population.\* But the later discoveries

\* It can scarcely be necessary to reproduce evidence in proof  
 of the statement here made. Yet I am told there are signs that  
 its force and abundance have been forgotten by many. It should  
 suffice to refer to the printed transactions of our society for a

*Further  
inquiry has  
shown that  
germs of  
disease,*

*as bacteria,  
etc.,*

*are pre-  
served in  
the soil;*

of science point more strongly to other dangers, arising still more directly from the buried dead. Every year records new facts identifying the cause of certain of the most familiar types of contagious disease with the presence of minute organisms, bacteria, the absorption of which into the blood, or even in some cases into the alimentary canal, suffices to reproduce the dangerous malady. One of the most deadly scourges to our race, viz. tubercular disease, is now known to be thus propagated. Then, besides, anthrax or splenic fever, spores from which are notoriously brought to the surface from buried animals below, and become fatal to the herds feeding there, it is now almost certain that malarious diseases, notably Roman fever, and even tetanus, are due to bacteria which

list of published records which long ago settled the question beyond all dispute. See Part II., the facts reported and alluded to at pp. 72-78. (Also *Transactions*, Nos. 1 and 2, edited by Mr. Fessie, and for bibliography of the subject given there. London: Smith & Elder.) But for those who desire specific statements on this head, together with much interesting matter regarding cremation in its scientific aspects and in connection with religious observance, see a paper in *Good Words*, July, 1885, by the Right Hon. Sir Lyon Playfair, K.C.B., M.P., entitled, "Disposal of the Dead." In relation to the subject above referred to, I shall make two brief extracts: "In most of our churchyards the dead are harming the living by destroying the soil, fouling the air, contaminating water-springs, and spreading the seeds of disease." "I have officially inspected many churchyards and made reports on their state, which, even to re-read, make me shudder."



flourish in the soil itself. The poisons of scarlet fever, enteric fever (typhoid), small-pox, diphtheria, malignant cholera, are undoubtedly transmissible through earth from the buried body by more than one mode. And thus by the act of interment we literally sow broadcast through the land innumerable seeds of pestilence—germs which long retain their vitality, many of them destined at some future time to fructify in premature death or ruined health for thousands.

And here I must call attention to the important fact that there is no mode of interment more dangerous to the living than that termed the "earth to earth" system, by which the exposure of the body to the soil is designed to be instant and complete. By this means the germs of disease just named may be carried with extreme rapidity into contact with the living; and such burial—during a cholera epidemic, for example—would prove a ready and active means of disseminating it. And this is precisely what was known to happen during the hurried and perfunctory burial proceedings which took place in the fatal epidemics of 1849 and 1854. How the system of placing a diseased or any other body in a mere basket for the express purpose of ensuring contact at once with every channel by which its contents may

*and thus  
some of the  
most fatal  
diseases are  
spread—*

*an action  
promoted by  
the "earth  
to earth"  
system.*

*"Earth to  
earth"  
burial  
especially  
dangerous.*

escape, can be advocated for sanitary purposes or by any sanitary authority, I am unable to conceive. For at this instant these contents, being in their fresh condition, possess the maximum activity of virulence as poisons, since there is reason to believe that time gradually diminishes it. If contact with a peculiarly fitting soil could be ensured, and absolute certainty could be attained that for two or three years or so nothing could possibly be carried away to contaminate the brooks and rivulets which convey a supply of drinking-water to the living, then the "earth to earth" process might be advocated with some show of reason, for the few spots where such conditions could be proved to exist. But our thickly populated country does not possess anything like adequate cemetery accommodation of this character; in fact, such soil so favourably situated must be extremely rare.

The dangerous germs of disease, and the most injurious elements resulting from organic changes in any dead body, are unquestionably slowly decomposed and rendered less pernicious by retention in close coffins for a few years, before contact with the surrounding soil takes place. But the adoption of a system which is designed to hasten dispersion of the elements by any and every channel open in the soil six feet below

the surface, so that the same spot may be similarly used after a brief term of years, is fraught with risk to the living.

It is vain to dream of wiping out the reproach to our civilization, which the presence and power of these diseases in our midst assuredly constitute, by any precaution or treatment, while effective machinery for their reproduction is in constant daily action. One of the modes by which buried infection may possibly reappear, is the ceaseless activity of the earth-worm, bringing to the surface—which, indeed, in a measure it slowly creates—poisonous matters engendered in animal bodies, although covered by a considerable depth of permeable soil. By the method of “earth to earth” burial, this process may be at once effectively utilized for the purpose of distributing them; at all events opportunity is thus offered, which a stout coffin long delays, and probably more or less effectively prevents. The proportion of deaths due to the diseases referred to is exceedingly large. And let it never be forgotten that they form no necessary part of any heritage appertaining to the human family. All are preventable, all certainly destined to disappear at some future day, when man has thoroughly made up his mind to deal with them seriously.

*Impossible to stamp out such diseases if the bodies are buried;*

*many diseases would disappear, under proper management.*

Thus, in the year 1884 the total number of

deaths from all causes in England and Wales was 530,828; of which those from zymotic diseases\* were 84,196, or about 16 per cent.

*Proportion  
of zymotic  
diseases  
causing  
death.*

In the year 1885 the total number of deaths was 522,750; of these the zymotic diseases were 68,972, or about 13'3 per cent.

In the year 1886 the total number of deaths was 537,276; of these the zymotic diseases were 73,747, or about 13'4 per cent. During the three years these diseases were below the average of preceding years.†

And one of the first steps, an absolutely essential step for the attainment of the inestimable result I have proposed, is the cremation of each body the life of which has been destroyed by one of these contagious maladies. I know no other means by which it can be ensured.

2. "*Poison-  
ing*" should  
be discovered  
before the  
body is  
buried,

The next important fact for our consideration is, that at present no adequate means are employed to ensure the discovery of poison as a cause of death before burial takes place. That "the prevention of an evil is better than its cure" is an old adage, full of truth in its application to most human affairs. It ought to be

\* Zymotic diseases (from ζύμωσις, "a ferment") are held to include small-pox, measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping-cough, typhus, enteric fever, simple fever, diarrhœa and dysentery, and cholera.

† Registrar-General's Report of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England and Wales, 47th and 48th, for the years 1884-1886,

accepted as a principle that, for the purpose of ensuring the safety of the public, it is infinitely preferable to provide a system adapted to detect an act of poisoning before burial, rather than to rely upon the slender chance that may arise hereafter. Once the victim has been consigned to the grave, small hope remains that discovery will take place. It is often stated that burial ensures the conservation of evidence that poison has been given, but without large qualification the statement is very far from true. Soon after burial distinct traces of most poisons—certainly those which are the most potent, such as morphia, aconite, atropine, strychnine, prussic acid, etc., are, sooner or later, decomposed; or they may become associated with new septic poisons developed in the body itself, which complicate the steps of subsequent inquiry, and invalidate unquestionable evidence which was present for some days after death, and might have been obtained while the body was above ground. There remain, then, only the metallic poisons which can be reckoned on as likely to be detected after exhumation, practically three in number, arsenic, antimony, and mercury. These will mostly continue for a considerable time in a condition which permits them to be obtained by analysis from the tissues of the person poisoned,

*after which  
all traces  
are  
generally  
rapidly  
destroyed.*

*Three only,  
of which  
traces long  
remain.*

*Carefully  
examine  
them, before  
burial.*

*Our neglect  
to inquire  
is remark-  
able.*

*We bury  
thousands  
even  
without  
certificate!*

*Proportion  
of inquests  
held.*

Nevertheless, exhumation is at the best a clumsy attempt to rectify culpable want of care before burial. For it is not too much to say that the chances in favour of discovering poison will be at least twenty to one if adequate inquiry be made while the body is above ground, as compared with the result of analysis made of those which have once been buried. Yet what is our position in relation to this inquiry? Does the fact just named practically rule our action in this matter? By no means. Thousands of bodies are buried every year, in this country, even without medical certificate of any kind. Of course there are numerous deaths from disease in which no medical advice has been demanded, because the warning symptoms of danger have been absent or insufficient; and for this very reason an inquiry should be made by some competent official. And there are perhaps occasionally some in which the absence of the medical man has been ensured in furtherance of a sinister design. The proportion of inquests to deaths is by no means inconsiderable, but it is certainly less than it ought to be. Of the 522,750 deaths of 1885, no less than 27,798, or 5·3 per cent., were certified after inquest; but no less than 18,146, or 3·5 per cent., were buried without medical certificate or any inquiry whatever. And in the year 1886 these

uncertified deaths amounted to 18,322. While it must be confessed that there is a very large number of cases insufficiently defined by certificate and unsatisfactorily accounted for. Since the date of the first edition a little more attention appears to have been given to this matter, for in the latest report—that is, of the deaths in 1889, amounting to 518,353—the causes of 29,079, or 5·6 per cent., were certified after inquest; and 15,100 deaths, or 2·9 per cent., were not certified, an improvement of about a half per cent.\*

*Great numbers of the certificates are useless.*

But in Scotland the uncertified deaths form a far larger proportion to the certified than they do in England. Thus in the year 1888, the latest issue, the uncertified deaths in Edinburgh amounted to no less than 10·1 per cent. of the entire number. Among the rural population, it was far larger, reaching from 14 to over 40 per cent. in the remoter districts.†

Few persons probably are aware of the

\* *Registrar-General's Report of Births, Deaths, and Marriages*, the 52nd, for the year 1889, p. xviii. Eyre and Spottiswood, 1890.

† *Registrar-General's Report of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in Scotland*, for the year 1888, p. lvi. Neill and Co., Edinburgh. 1890.

For an account of the laxity of usage in certifying death in Scotland, see a pamphlet by Dr. Charles Cameron, LL.D., M.P., entitled *The Modern Cremation Movement* (Alex. Gardner, Paisley and London. 1888). The whole work is an admirable and very forcible statement of the case in favour of cremation.

infinitesimal relation which exhumation for legal purposes bears, by comparison, with the enormous opportunities offered for the commission of undiscoverable crime, due to our imperfect arrangements for inquiry into the cause of death in all ordinary cases. It is not too much to say that, in a very large proportion of these, the registration is merely an empty form. "To strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," as a metaphor, inadequately represents the inconsistent conduct of those who continue to disregard the facilities carelessly permitted for criminal poisoning, to magnify the slender detective resources afforded by exhumation. Dr. Danford Thomas, the well-known coroner for Central Middlesex, informs me that during the last seven years he has held about 10,000 inquests in that district, and only three exhumations have been ordered during the same period.

*Exhumation  
excessively  
rare.*

But at my suggestion, Mr. Danford Thomas has been good enough to organize a systematic inquiry extending throughout England and Wales, designed to obtain the results of exhumation for the last twenty years or thereabouts. There are 334 coroners in England and Wales, of whom 317, embracing all the important districts, have responded to a series of questions sent out to each for the purpose. Of this number, 62 had been directed to perform



exhumation, and the total number of exhumations was 102. From these data it may be estimated that the mean number of exhumations made in a year throughout England and Wales is only five, and less than one yearly for poison! The number of inquests during 1886 was 30,548—showing, as an average, one exhumation to every 6100 inquests.

*Five in a year in this country,*

#### EXHUMATIONS MADE FOR MEDICO-LEGAL PURPOSES IN ENGLAND AND WALES DURING THE LAST TWENTY YEARS.

##### ANALYSIS OF VERDICTS IN 102 CASES OF EXHUMATION.

Natural causes.	Accidental causes.	Murder.	Manslaughter.	Open verdict.	<i>and very few of these are cases of poisoning.</i>
57	20	13	4	8	

Whether cremation be adopted, or the practice of burial alone be continued, in either case it is equally desirable to make a far more searching inquiry than we do at present in all cases of death. And this inquiry should be conducted by a qualified officer appointed for the purpose. Probably the officer of health in most districts—in some exceptional ones, the medical officer appointed under the Poor Law—would be able to perform the necessary duty; this being paid for by some fee for each examination, to be determined. I called special attention to this

*Far more searching inquiry must be made at death.*

England  
behind other  
countries  
in perform-  
ing this  
duty.

The French  
practice

described in  
detail.

pressing want seventeen years ago (see Part II. of this work, p. 99), showing that the practice in this country was greatly behind that of France, Germany, and other European nations. In every case of death without exception in those countries, the uncovered dead body is examined by a medical officer set apart for that duty, distinguished as the *médecin vérificateur*. In Paris, for example, as soon as a death is reported, the civil officer communicates with the medical officer of the *quartier* in which the deceased resided, and awaits the report to decide (in concert with the deceased's friends) at what hour burial should take place. The medical officer attends at the residence indicated, and makes a written report, detailing all the ascertainable facts relative to the death which he has obtained by inquiry, besides those which result from the examination of the body, in accordance with a schedule supplied. This officer, having of course had no professional relation with the deceased, records the name and address of the doctor who has attended, as well as those of the chemist who supplied the medicines, together with the names of nurses if any were employed. He describes the hygienic condition of the house, states what surviving relatives lived there, etc. No burial can take place under any pretext whatever until this

inquiry has been made, all the facts recorded, and permission has been granted. In short, it is the object of the examination to leave no means untried of detecting the cause of death before the body disappears from view.\*

I may add that the same system is adopted throughout the departments of France. In Vienna a similar document is always prepared, and perhaps with still greater care and minuteness. The same may be said of Munich, Frankfurt, Geneva, and other Continental cities.

It is needless to say how greatly superior this system is to our own; and it is impossible not to add that all who are really earnest in a desire to detect the secret poisoner are bound to advocate the establishment of that or some similar method of supervision here. Otherwise it is scarcely fair, and it is certainly inconsistent, to defend the practice of earth burial, with its manifold dangers to the living, for the sole purpose of ensuring the right of occasionally exhuming a body, in order to repair the lack of adequate observation at a more fitting time.

The next step in the argument will take its starting-point from the undeniable fact that a large majority of deaths taking place in our community are obviously and unquestionably

*The practice in Austria and elsewhere.*

*To detect the poisoner. such an inquiry should be adopted here.*

*Regarding cremation, let it be*

\* See Part IV., p. 150, for a facsimile copy of the schedule employed in Paris.

*noted that almost all deaths are due to natural causes ;*

*certainly nine-tenths of them.*

*Five per cent. are determined by the coroner's inquiry.*

natural. It is very desirable to ascertain as nearly as possible what is the proportion of these, or, inversely, what is the percentage of those about which some doubt as to the cause may be entertained. I have carefully studied this question, and it is important to consider it before we come to close quarters with the objection started at the outset. I suppose no one will imagine that there is the slightest ground for doubt about the nature of the fatal attack, in other words the cause of death, in, say, nine-tenths of the cases which occur. In fact, the proportion of obviously natural causes is very much larger than that. Old age and natural decay ; all zymotic or contagious diseases, most of which have been enumerated ; the acute and chronic diseases of the lung and other local organs, cancer, diabetes, rheumatic affections, childbirth, besides the 5 per cent. of unknown cases determined by the coroner, leave a narrow margin for doubtful examples. In acute dysentery or diarrhoea, and in some affections of the brain, circumspection is necessary in relation to the possibility of poisoning by irritants, in the first class of cases ; by narcotics in the second. Then in infantile disorders, especially among illegitimate children ; and among the poorest class where the lives of infants are insured, observation should be alert.

Regarding all sources of uncertainty, I think one case in a hundred of the average mortality at all ages would be a high estimate of the proportion in which some reason exists for making more careful inquiry than our present system ensures. In other words, the present system, demanding as it does exercise of the coroner's function in 5·3 per cent. of deaths, this might possibly be found desirable in nearly another 1 per cent. after the inquiry of the *médecin vérificateur*. This is a considerable addition, because it must be recollected that the coroner's quest is chiefly needed to investigate mechanical accidents causing death, and personal violence, of which evidence is easily available. It is not altogether a secret that some medical men of large experience hold the opinion that the administration of poison causing death is not so uncommon as the infrequent discovery of the act might be held to indicate. Conviction in a court of justice following the crime is very rare. The present system of burial after certificate—and not a few, as we have seen, have no certificate—throws very little light on the class of doubtful cases. And yet we have been gravely forbidden to practise cremation, which would deprive thousands of bodies now buried of those elements which are dangerous to the living, lest perchance in a solitary case of criminal poison-

*Perhaps one per cent. more would be referred to the coroner by an official investigator.*

*Very few convictions for poisoning obtained under present system.*

ing, which we have neglected through carelessness or indifference to investigate at a fitting time, the chance should be lost, if some years afterwards suspicions arise, of acquiring the often questionable evidence which exhumation might afford !

*Advocates of  
cremation  
only desire  
that it  
should be  
optional ;*

Well, unreasonable as such a course of action must appear, when seriously considered, I will grant its advocates, if there still be any, for argument's sake, that it is not wholly unjustifiable, and nevertheless I shall assert the safety and the superiority of cremation.

The advocates of cremation, as I learned with some disappointment many years ago, and many a time since, have been widely misunderstood in respect of their aims, and no amount of restatement appears to correct an impression made on the public at the outset, to the effect that they proposed, or at all events have desired, to make cremation compulsory. Let it be understood then, once for all, that we have never suggested that any man should be submitted to the process against his own will or that of his nearest friends. As to enforcing it in all cases by legal enactment, as has been imagined by some, I doubt whether the most uneasy sleepers among us have ever dreamed of such a scheme of legislative tyranny. So far, indeed, have we been from holding such views,

that I believe it has never been proposed to make the system under any circumstances universally applicable.

All we have ever asked is that cremation should be optional ; that it should be recognized as legal (it is not illegal) ; that leave to perform it should be granted only under certain conditions ; and that adequate precautions should be taken against its abuse, so that the destruction of evidence against criminal poisoning should be rendered almost if not quite impossible, through the exercise of more than ordinary care.

I earnestly ask the great public to consider the significant fact that it is *we*, the advocates of cremation, who have sought to perform it under the above-mentioned specific conditions ; that *we* have brought Bills into the Parliaments of this country and of New South Wales to obtain these objects ;\* and that our critics and opponents have done nothing to diminish or prevent the dangers they allege to attend on cremation, and which do largely appertain to burial, while they have actually voted in majorities to prevent us from doing so. Had the practice of cremation in our own country not been conducted thus far by cautious hands, the abuse in question might have arisen. But

*never to make it compulsory.*

*And they desire to practise it only under stringent conditions, so as to avoid it when doubt exists as to cause of death.*

\* House of Commons, April, 1884 ; Legislative Assembly of Sydney, August, 1886.

that they have not occurred is due to us, not to our opponents.

*Safety attained by following means:—*

The proposals here conceived to be necessary to ensure the safety of the public, regarding equally dangers innumerable arising from the buried dead and the occasional risk of destroying evidence against crime by cremation, are as follows:—

*1. Reject all doubtful cases.*

First. I desire to act on the principle that we shall reject all doubtful cases as unsuited for cremation. It will soon be seen that the limit of this class may be provided for without difficulty by way of exclusion, and that it will be ascertained by proper management to be exceedingly small.

Secondly. My first definite proposal will be as follows; and here for the present the appeal is made not for legal provision, but to the common sense of my fellow-citizens, who cannot be less desirous than myself to guard the health of their families from disease and death, seeing that this is our common interest.

*2. Cremate the bodies of those dead from zymotic diseases:*

Consent to cremate the body of every member of the family who has died of small-pox, scarlet fever, or diphtheria, to begin with. General acquiescence in this reasonable proposal alone would tax somewhat severely for some years the resources of cremation. Yet here is a large and most important group of

*a large group.*



cases which, in common justice to the living, ought to be destroyed with as much rapidity as possible, and about which no manner of doubt as to the cause of death can possibly be entertained. Honest, thoughtful consideration as to the mode of treating that which remains in most instances after the destructive action of such diseases on the body must diminish the desire to preserve it, and reconcile survivors to its purification and reduction to harmless ashes, when these are followed to the last resting-place. Concerning which more hereafter.

But I interpolate a suggestion here; and it is one which must ere long be considered with a view to legislative enactment. It ought to be made imperative that in every one of these cases, when not cremated, the coffin should be filled, after the body is placed therein, with quicklime, not longer than twenty-four hours after death. Less perfect than cremation, this process at least ought to be enjoined under penalty. It will rank as a national folly, if not a crime, to omit this or an equivalent safeguard after due warning given of the importance of protecting the living; since there can be no difficulty in resorting to this mode of largely diminishing, although not of extinguishing, the risk from infection.

*In all such cases the use of chemical agents to counteract danger should be compulsory unless cremation be practised.*

Thirdly. In all other cases, such as those of

3. *In all deaths manifestly from natural causes cremation should be permitted.*

old age, consumption, and various other modes of death, which have gradually arrived at their termination under medical supervision without manifesting a symptom to denote the action of any violent agent, an application to be cremated should be granted on the conditions prescribed by the Cremation Society of England (already detailed). When a responsible officer, "Examined into the cause of death," is appointed, the decision will of course form part of his ordinary business. As before intimated, I have charged myself with the duty, on behalf of the English society as its president, of carefully examining the certificates sent in and other sources of information, and no cremation has taken place until I have been satisfied with the evidence adduced.

4. *In doubtful cases autopsy is always necessary;*

Fourthly. In every case in which evidence is wanting, one of two courses is open to the applicant. If there really is any doubt as to the cause of death, it is a case in which, according to the present state of our law, the coroner ought to interfere. If he thinks that it is not necessary to do so, the responsible officer may say, as I should feel called on to say now, if circumstances suggested the want of more distinct evidence, "I advise an autopsy to be made, and will send a proper person to conduct one." In that case the doubt will almost certainly be

*by which means the*

solved ; but if not, the stomach and a portion of some internal organ would be transferred to a small case, sealed, and preserved. This is a proceeding I suggested and strongly advised, as a complete safeguard against destroying evidence of poison by cremation, when I first advocated it in 1874.\* And doubt after autopsy could be entertained only in an extremely small proportion of cases. If the friends object to the proposal, let the body be buried by all means ; we have avoided the doubtful case.

Moreover, we have done so without raising an imputation. If any arise, it is solely due to the action of those who have declined a private autopsy requested by the officer responsible for cremation, who merely desired to avoid the faintest chance of applying the process to a body when the cause of death is not quite apparent. It is difficult to imagine an objection to such a proceeding ; but if there is, as I said before, the cemetery is always open.

What has become of the medico-legal difficulty? I contend that it has absolutely vanished. And I add that, if my suggestions are adopted, secret poisoning, which it must be confessed, owing to our carelessness in the matter of the certificate, is much more practicable in this country than in France or Germany, would,

\* See Part II. p. 103.

thanks to the supporters of cremation, be more readily detected, and therefore would be more unlikely to occur, than in any other country in the world.

*Other considerations.*

*Cremation would save thousands of acres for profitable husbandry,*

*so important in a crowded country.*

*The Bishop of Manchester's remarks.*

Three results of another kind must be named, which naturally follow the adoption of cremation.

First. Thousands of acres, yearly increasing in number, might be restored to better uses than that of becoming the mere receptacle of decaying bodies.\* Action to this end will be inevitable some day, and is simply a question of time and population. The late Bishop of Manchester drew attention to this obvious fact some years ago. Having in the course of duty to consecrate a cemetery, the Bishop observed, "Here is another hundred acres of land withdrawn from the food-producing area of this country for ever." He went on to state that "cemeteries are becoming not only a difficulty, an expense, and an inconvenience, but an actual danger ;" finally adding, "I hold that the earth was made, not for the dead, but for the living. No intelligent faith can suppose that any Christian doctrine is affected by the manner in which, or the time in which, this mortal body of ours crumbles into dust and sees corruption."

\* The number of acres at present thus occupied for the metropolis is upwards of two thousand ; and the value of this unproductive land is considerably more than a quarter of a million sterling.

A small but sufficient portion of our present cemeteries will no doubt be utilized for the purposes of cremation; the chapels being utilized still as before, and certain spaces reserved for the conservation or burial of ashes. Nine-tenths of the area will be available, with due care, for ornamental gardens for the use of towns where such exist; or, after the lapse of suitable periods of time, for other purposes.

Secondly. The reduction of wholly unnecessary expenditure upon funeral rites is accomplished by cremation. The cost of funerals during the year 1884 in England and Wales was carefully calculated by an expert at nearly five millions sterling. One-third of this sum would amply suffice for cremation, including the use of appointments for transit, etc., in the most decorous manner. Modern cremation does not suggest or harmonize with display. Small as the cost is at present, it will be largely diminished when the demand has considerably increased. A tariff of expenditure, regulated according to the varying requirements of applicants, has been recently drawn up, and may be obtained at the office of the society.\*

Thirdly. Cremation has created an opportunity for restoring the purified remains of the Christian worshipper to the consecrated precincts

*Cremation  
largely  
reduces the  
cost of  
funerals.*

*Cremation  
enables the  
ancient  
churchyards*

\* See Part IV. p. 136.

*and crypts  
to be  
utilized  
again;*

of his church, whence the "corruptible body" has now for many years been banished by urgent sanitary necessity.

*which by  
order of the  
Home  
Secretary  
could be  
reopened  
with  
absolute  
safety.*

Whether in ancient crypt, or in cloisters newly erected for the purpose on the long disused burying-ground, the ashes of cremated bodies might be deposited, each in its cell, in countless numbers after religious service performed. Being absolutely harmless, every intramural burying-ground and every vault or tomb within our churches, long closed to burials on account of their dangerous influence, may now be safely and appropriately utilized as depositories of the ashes, when the last solemnities have taken place. It is high time to bring this important fact under the notice of the Secretary of State; for there is now no pretext whatever for refusing to localities—long ago consecrated for the express purpose of receiving human remains, and recently closed on urgent sanitary grounds alone—the restitution of their ancient service, provided that all future deposits are absolutely deprived of any and every offensive or injurious taint by complete incineration.

On the other hand, when no desire is manifested to preserve the relics of the departed, and no urn or casket is sought to contain them, they may be safely spread abroad on the soil, and thus be submitted without delay to the process

of forming those new combinations which must inevitably sooner or later take place.

Cremation, indeed, lends literal truth and reality to the grand and solemn words, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;" and the impressive service so well known to us all, may, with very slight change,\* be read with a fulness of meaning never conveyed before. The last rite has purified the body; its elements of physical evil have been annihilated by fire. Already its dispersed constituents, having escaped the long imprisonment of the tomb, pursue their eternal circuit, in harmony with nature's uniform and perfect course.

*Cremation illustrates our ancient form of service, and adds to the force of its sentiment*

In connection with this wide subject, the disposal of the dead, whether it be by burial or by cremation, I cannot too strongly urge that the Government be solicited to consider the question of legislating in order to secure better evidence as to the cause of death in all cases than is attainable by the present system. At the same time, the conditions on which cremation should

*Application to Parliament essential.*

\* I have heard the following passage, "We therefore commit his body to the ground," read "We therefore commit his body to its rest," over the remains before cremation, and the effect appeared to me harmonious and appropriate. If read over the ashes, after cremation, perhaps the word "remains—to their rest," might be properly substituted for "body to the ground."

be performed should be considered and determined.

*Regulations suggested for the registration of death, and management of crematories.*

*Official certificate indispensable before burial or cremation.*

*Official examiner in every case of death,*

*who certifies the cause or demands an inquest.*

*All crematories to be licensed by Home Secretary.*

I venture to offer the following suggestions by way of indicating the chief provisions to be settled by any Bill introduced into Parliament to regulate the registration of death and the disposal of the dead :—

1. No body to be buried, burned, or otherwise disposed of without a medical certificate of death signed, after personal knowledge and observation, or by information obtained after investigation made by a qualified medical man.

2. A qualified medical man should be appointed as official certifier in every parish, or district of neighbouring parishes, whose duty it will be to examine in all cases of death and report the cause in writing, together with such other details as may be deemed necessary.

3. If the circumstances of death obviously demand a coroner's inquest, the case is to be transferred to his court and the cause determined, with or without autopsy. If there appears to be no ground for holding an inquest, and autopsy be necessary to the furnishing of a certificate, the official certifier will make it, and state the result in his report.

4. No person or company should be henceforth permitted to construct or use an apparatus for burning human bodies without obtaining



a licence from the Home Secretary or other authority as determined.

5. No crematory should be so employed unless the site, construction, and system of management have been approved after survey by an officer appointed by Government for the purpose. *None to be employed until after inspection, and to be subject thereto.* But the licence to construct or use a crematory should not be withheld if guarantees are given that the conditions required are or shall be complied with. All such crematories to be subject at all times to inspection by an officer appointed by the Government.

6. The burning of a human body, otherwise than in an officially recognized crematory, shall be illegal, and punishable by penalty. *Cremation otherwise illegal.*

7. No human body shall be burned unless the official examiner who signs the certificate of death shall, in consequence of application made, add the words "Cremation permitted." And this he will be bound to do if, after due inquiry, with or without autopsy or coroner's inquest, he is satisfied, and can certify that the deceased has died from natural causes, and not from ill-treatment, poison, or violence. *No cremation without official permit.*

## PART IV.

### OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED BY THE CREMATION SOCIETY OF ENGLAND—METHOD OF PROCEDURE IN INVESTIGATING THE CAUSE OF DEATH IN FRANCE.

THE official papers of the Cremation Society embody practical directions relating to the course necessary to be followed by the friends or representatives of the deceased for whom cremation is desired, together with copies of the forms which must be filled up. These are supplied to all who require them at the offices of the society, 8, New Cavendish Street, Portland Place.

After these follow copies of the forms, setting forth the mode of procedure adopted throughout France, in order to ascertain the cause of death in every instance without exception. A similar inquiry is made in Germany.

#### *The Council:*

*Official  
papers  
issued by the  
Cremation  
Society of  
England.*

SIR HENRY THOMPSON, F.R.C.S., etc ,  
President.

Right Hon. Lord Bramwell.

James S. Budgett, Esq.

Dr. Cameron, M.P.

Mrs. M. Rose Crawshay.

Dr. Farquharson, M.P.

Captain Sir Douglas Galton, K.C.B., LL.D.,  
etc.

Ernest Hart, Esq.

Rev. H. R. Haweis, M.A.

Rev. Brooke Lambert, M.A.

Right Hon. Sir Lyon Playfair, K.C.B., M.P., etc.

W. Robinson, Esq., F.L.S.

Martin Ridley Smith, Esq.

Rev. Charles Voysey, B.A.

Sir T. Spencer Wells, Bart.

*Honorary Secretary*: J. C. Swinburne-Ham-  
ham, Esq., J.P., Barrister-at-Law.

*Solicitors*: Messrs. Harrison and Beale.

*Architect*: E. F. C. Clarke, Esq.

*Consulting Chemists*: Messrs. Newlands Bros.

*Bankers*: Messrs. Sir Samuel Scott, Bart.  
and Co.

*Auditor*: Mr. A. D. Pocknell.

*Offices*: 8, New Cavendish Street, Portland  
Place, London, W.

## I.

This society was formed to promote the *Objects of Society*.  
objects set forth in the following declaration:—

“We disapprove the present custom of burying the dead, and  
desire to substitute some mode which shall rapidly resolve the

body into its component elements by a process which cannot offend the living, and shall render the remains absolutely innocuous. Until some better method is devised, we desire to adopt that usually known as cremation."

The conditions of membership are—

I. Adhesion by signature to the above declaration.

II. The payment of an annual subscription of one guinea, or a single payment of ten guineas.

## II.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS.—The crematorium, which is the only one in use in England, is situated in the parish of St. John's, two and a quarter miles from Woking station on the main line of the London and South Western Railway, which is in communication with all the railway systems having termini in London. In the event of a body having to be brought from a distance, any of the companies will provide a special carriage on the usual notice being given, and convey direct to Woking, where the use of a hearse can be obtained for conveyance to the crematorium.

The buildings comprise a handsome chapel, communicating with which are the crematorium and comfortable waiting and retiring rooms. The lodge at the entrance to the grounds is occupied by the society's attendant, who will show inquirers over the premises, daily between

ten and five, unless a cremation is proceeding or about to take place.

The arrangements for cremating a body are available to the public on the following conditions.

1. An application in writing must be made by the executor or nearest friend of the deceased—unless it has been made by the deceased person himself during life—stating that it was the wish of the deceased to be cremated after death, or that he entertained no objection thereto. *Conditions on which cremation may be performed.*
2. Two certificates from duly qualified medical men are required relative to the cause of death, one, at least, of whom must have attended the deceased. These the society obtain direct, and it is therefore necessary, in making application for cremation, that their names and addresses be given in full.

These must satisfy the council of the society or their representative, and in some rare or doubtful case an autopsy might be desirable.

### III.

#### DIRECTIONS FOR ARRANGING CREMATION.

—Immediately on death, notice thereof, with the names and addresses of the two medical men, should be sent to the office of the society [8, New Cavendish Street, Portland Place, W.], the address of which can be found in the London Directory, or a letter or telegram addressed to the Cremation Society, London, W., will be at once forwarded to the office by the postal authorities, after which the local undertaker

should be instructed to supply a suitable shell—the best material being light pine.

*No heavy  
coffin to be  
used.*

It cannot be too clearly understood that it is most undesirable to encase the body in a heavy or costly coffin; A LIGHT PINE SHELL IS THE BEST RECEPTACLE FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREMATION. There is no reason why, for the funeral service, a simple shell should not suffice, and it may be covered with cloth at very small expense, if preferred. When, however, it is intended to hold a funeral service in public, and with some degree of ceremony, before cremation, a more ornate coffin may be used if desired, but it should contain the shell described, which can be afterwards removed.

*Form of  
application.*

Upon receiving notice of the death, the application-form is sent to be filled in by the executor or the nearest relative of deceased, and this should be returned to the society with the sum of £6, the charge for the cremation, services of attendant, use of chapel and waiting-room, as well as a simple urn for the preservation of the ashes. At the same time the applicant must state if it be desired that the local clergyman (who has kindly consented to act when desired) should officiate at the funeral service in the chapel, as, in the event of his services being required, a fee of one guinea must be paid to him direct at the time. Any other person

appointed by the friends may take the service if preferred.

In the mean time, our form of medical certificate has been sent to the medical attendant of the deceased, who, after filling in and signing it, must forward it to the other medical practitioner, and each receives express instructions in relation to his duty. If the latter is also satisfied that the statements made relative to the cause of death are correct, and that there are no circumstances likely to render exhumation of the body necessary, he will certify to that effect. *The medical forms.*

The cremation, if the death has occurred in London or the suburbs, usually takes place on the third day after the day on which notice is given at the society's office. If the remains are lying in the country, the cremation would take place a day later.

The most convenient times for cremation are as follows :—

Train leave Waterloo.		Hour for Cremation.
9.30 a.m.	=	11 a.m.
11.45 a.m.		1.30 p.m.
2.45 p.m.	- - - -	4.15 p.m.

Upon the arrival of the body at the crematorium, if there is a funeral service, it is at once proceeded with, at the conclusion of which the undertaker and his assistants convey the remains into the crematorium, where they may

*No inspection of process permitted.*

be followed by one friend of the deceased ; but no inspection of the process is on any account permitted. The operation usually occupies about one hour and a half to two hours, at the conclusion of which the ashes are gathered together by the society's officer and placed in an urn for preservation. Scrupulous care is taken to maintain them intact and pure for this purpose.

*The urn and its destination.*

The urn containing the ashes may be left in one of the niches in the chapel for one calendar month from the date of the cremation, free of charge, to enable the friends to secure a suitable permanent resting-place ; if it be left beyond that time, a fee of five shillings per month is required, but the society will not be responsible for it beyond one year from the date of cremation, unless special arrangements for permanent deposit there are made.

For this purpose the society has provided ornamental stone niches, constructed within the building, which can be acquired, according to their size, as a "single tomb" or "family vault," and is about to provide increased space, for the purpose of preserving the ashes.

The price charged for these niches can be obtained on inquiry at the office.

For those who desire the ashes to be buried in the grounds of the crematorium, a special



portion has been railed off and cultivated, in which an urn can be buried for the fee of one guinea, within a given space, and preserved intaet.

*May be buried in the grounds.*

# IV.

THIS FORM IS PREPARED to enable those who prefer cremation to burial to record in precise terms their wishes and directions in relation thereto.

*Form for recording desire to be cremated.*

This form should be signed, dated, and witnessed, in duplicate. One copy should be deposited with the signer's executor, or next of kin, and the other sent to the Secretary of the CREMATION SOCIETY OF ENGLAND, by whom it will be preserved and regarded as confidential.

*I hereby express to my survivors my earnest desire that on my decease, my body shall be cremated according to the system employed by the CREMATION SOCIETY OF ENGLAND, and under the arrangements made by the Society for the purpose.*

*Signature.....*

*Address.....*

*Date.....*

*Witnessed by*

*.....Signature.*

*.....Address.*

*.....Date.*

N.B.—*It should be borne in mind that the above is only a request, and cannot be enforced against any person. It is therefore very necessary that the executor or executors should, at the same time, express their willingness to carry these instructions out.*

## V.

*Payment  
during life  
to ensure  
cremation  
after death.*

ATTENTION IS CALLED to the following "Minute of Council" which has been recently passed:—

"In the event of any person desiring, during life, to be cremated at death, the Society is prepared to accept a donation from him or her, of Ten Guineas, undertaking in consideration thereof to perform the cremation, provided all the conditions set forth in the forms issued by the Society are complied with."

In consideration of the above payment the Cremation Society undertakes—on the decease of a subscriber—also to send an agent when required, without further charge, to the family residence, if within twenty miles of Charing Cross, for the purpose of supplying information and making all the necessary arrangements. By this means survivors, who may naturally anticipate considerable difficulty in complying with the request on the part of the deceased to be cremated, may be spared all trouble and anxiety as to the manner of carrying it into execution. When the distance is more than twenty miles, information will be supplied by letter, or an agent sent for a very moderate charge.

*All necessary forms, ready for filling up, can be obtained on application at the Society's offices, No. 8, New Cavendish Street, Portland Place, W.*

J. C. SWINBURNE-HANHAM,

*Hon. Sec.*

January, 1891.

FORMS NECESSARY TO BE DULY FILLED  
UP WHENEVER CREMATION IS DE-  
SIREO.

FORM No. 1.

APPLICATION FROM EXECUTOR, OR THE  
NEAREST RELATIVE OF DECEASED.

I, (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

(Occupation) \_\_\_\_\_ hereby request  
the Cremation Society of England to undertake the cre-  
mation of the body of \_\_\_\_\_  
and I certify that the deceased expressed no objection  
(orally or in writing) to being cremated after death.

Medical certificates of the cause of death are, or will  
be, forwarded.

(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_

IMPORTANT.—This form, when filled in, is to be  
returned to the Office of the Cremation Society, the  
address of the medical man who has attended the  
deceased being required as *soon as possible*.

NOTE.—When no medical certificate is enclosed, an  
autopsy must be made and certified by a medical  
officer appointed by the Society, and at the expense  
of the applicant or of the estate of the deceased.

**FORM No. 2.**  
**MEDICAL CERTIFICATES OF THE CAUSE OF DEATH.**  
**TO THE CREMATION SOCIETY OF ENGLAND.**

CERTIFICATE  
 No. 1

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that I attended

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

(Profession or occupation) \_\_\_\_\_

aged \_\_\_\_\_, that I last saw h \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ 18 \_\_\_\_\_

that \_\_\_\_\_ he died on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

and that the cause of death was as hereunder written.

Cause of death.	Time from attack till death.

(a)  
First.

(b)  
Second.

The  
 Medical Attendant  
 will sign here.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Prof. title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

\* The time for each form of disease or symptom is reckoned from its commencement.

*This certificate must be signed by a Registered Medical Practitioner.*

CERTIFICATE

NO. H.

I certify that I have, in relation to the expressed desire that the deceased should be cremated, carefully and separately investigated the circumstances connected with the death. I declare that there are no circumstances connected with the death which could, in my opinion, make exhumation of the body hereafter necessary.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Prof. title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The second Medical  
Man will sign here.

*This certificate must be signed by another Registered Medical Practitioner.*

The Cremation Society reserves to itself the right of refusing to carry out Cremation in any case without assigning reason.

## ESTIMATE OF EXPENSES

Connected with the conveyance of a body from London  
—that is to say, from any part not distant more than  
four miles from Charing Cross—to the Crematory,  
Woking.

	£	s.	d.
For a pine shell with ordinary lining ...	1	10	0

N.B.—More expensive shells and coffins can be provided, but the Society strongly recommends the simplest form for the purpose of cremation only.

When required for service in church also, it may be covered in black, or colour, from two guineas upwards. An ornate coffin may be employed for this purpose, provided the body occupies a shell, to be removed for cremation afterwards.

Delivery of shell at residence within limit named, with attendants ... ..	0	15	0
--	---	----	---

Hearse, driver, and man in charge from the residence to Woking, about thirty miles	5	10	0
---	---	----	---

Men's attendance at residence, to place body in hearse, if required ... ..	0	15	0
---	---	----	---

N.B.—If the shell is sent and the body is removed to the hearse at the same time, this charge is not incurred.

£ 8 10 0

If the hearse and horses are sent by rail— which saves much time, and is often convenient for those who desire to attend— including one man besides the driver, an extra guinea is incurred ... ..	1	1	0
--	---	---	---

	£	s.	d.
For each additional man to the above named			
for removing the body at Woking, as may			
be necessary, whether sent by road or	0	15	0
rail ... ..			

N.B.—The above-named terms are those charged by well-known firms of undertakers at the West End of London.

OFFICES OF THE CREMATION SOCIETY OF ENGLAND

8, New Cavendish Street, Portland Place.

### THE FORMS ADOPTED IN FRANCE

and invariably filled up by the officers appointed, in every case of death occurring either in Paris or in the Departments before burial or cremation is permitted.

Form No. 1 is sent by the municipal authority to the official medical examiner, requiring him to verify the fact of the cause of death.

Form No. 2 is the certificate which, after examination of the body, the medical examiner leaves with the family, who send it to the municipal authority. Permission to bury can then be obtained.

Form No. 3 is the record which is made by the medical examiner and preserved by the authorities.



FORM No. 1.

PREFECTURE DE LA  
SEINE

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE  
LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ

SECRÉTARIAT GÉNÉRAL

VILLE DE PARIS.—MAIRIE DU           <sup>me</sup> ARRONDISSEMENT  
NOUS, MAIRE DU            ARRONDISSEMENT DE PARIS,

DIRECTION  
des

Vu la déclaration qui nous a été faite à            heure,            minutes  
du           , le            et d'après laquelle M.             
prénoms            époux ou veu de           

AFFAIRES MUNICIPALES

2<sup>e</sup> Division.—3<sup>e</sup> Bureau

âgé de            profession            serait décédé des suites  
de            au            étage d'une maison sise             
n°            à            heure            minutes du           

Vérification de Décès

MANDAT DE VISITE

Déléguons M.           , docteur en médecine, à l'effet de se  
transporter dans la dite maison, de se faire montrer le corps non vêtu,  
de constater le décès et d'en indiquer les causes.

N° DU CARNET           

A Paris, le            188          , à            heure d           

Cachet de la Mairie      Signature :



*Le présent mandat doit être conservé par le médecin  
de l'État civil.*

## FORM No. 2.

CERTIFICAT DE DÉCÈS  
et ARRONDISSEMENT

*Le présent certificat doit être luissé à la famille et rap-  
porté à la Mairie pour l'établissement de l'acte de décès.*

N° DE L'ACTE :

Je soussigné, docteur en médecine, en vertu du mandat  
délivré par le Maire, certifie avoir fait la visite du corps de la  
personne désignée audit mandat, et avoir constaté ou recueilli  
sur place, à l'aide des indications fournies par \_\_\_\_\_,  
les renseignements suivants :

État civil du	d'écédé ...	{	Nom _____	_____	
			Prénoms _____		
			Sexe _____		_____
			Célibataire _____		_____
			Marié à _____		_____
Né à _____	_____	{	_____	_____	
			_____	_____	
Filiation.....	.....	{	Fil de _____	_____	
			Et de _____	_____	

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

FORM No. 2.—*Continued.*

Profession \_\_\_\_\_ (patron ou ouvrier) \_\_\_\_\_

Est décédé le \_\_\_\_\_ 18\_\_\_\_, à \_\_\_\_\_ heure du \_\_\_\_\_

Rue \_\_\_\_\_ N° \_\_\_\_\_

Nom et demeure du médecin traitant \_\_\_\_\_

" " du pharmacien \_\_\_\_\_

Je déclare que le décès est constant et paraît avoir été causé par \_\_\_\_\_

Fait à Paris, le \_\_\_\_\_ 188\_\_\_\_, à \_\_\_\_\_ heure du \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature :*

Je déclare, en outre, avoir constaté la nécessité de prescrire la mise en bière d'urgence à raison de \_\_\_\_\_

**et avoir délivré une réquisition à cet effet** (Ce paragraphe doit être rayé lorsqu'il n'y a pas eu réquisition et que la Maire doit pourvoir aux mesures à prendre).

*Signature :*

Le logement est-il insalubre ? \_\_\_\_\_

## FORM No. 3.

SECRETARIAT  
GÉNÉRAL

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ

Service de la  
Statistique  
municipale

PRÉFECTURE DE LA SEINE

D É C È S

VILLE DE PARIS.—MAIRIE DU  
ARRONDISSEMENT

N<sup>o</sup> DE L'ACTE : NOTICE STATISTIQUE IMPERSONNELLE  
 A remplir en même temps que le certificat de visite, et à  
 déposer à la Mairie

NOTA.—Le médecin de l'État civil peut biffer les mots contraires au cas qu'il a sous les yeux, ou écrire oui ou faire une croix après le mot conforme. Il est prié d'écrire le nom de la profession exercée, en faisant suivre ce nom d'un *o*, s'il s'agit d'un ouvrier, ou d'un *p*, s'il s'agit d'un patron, et aussi de mettre un *x* à la suite des questions auxquelles il ne peut répondre. Le degré de salubrité est *apprécié* et non *demandé*.

Mois d \_\_\_\_\_ 188 \_\_\_\_\_

ADULTES ET ENFANTS AGÉS DE 5 ANS ET AU-DESSUS.

État civil	{	Sexe du décédé _____
		Célibataire _____
		Marié _____
		Date ou durée du mariage _____
		Veuf _____ et depuis quand ? _____
		Agé de _____
Demeure	{	Né à _____
		Département d _____
Date du décès : le _____ du mois d _____		
Quartier _____		
		Rue _____ n <sup>o</sup> _____
		_____ étage.
		Salubre _____ insalubre _____

Dans le cas de mariage	{	Nombre d'enfants morts et vivants issus du mariage		_____
		Nombre d'enfants survivants		_____
		Degré de parenté des époux	Oncle et nièce	_____
			Tante et neveu	_____
Cousins germains	_____			
		Issus de cousins germains		_____
Profession	{	Du décédé { patron		_____
		ouvrier		_____
		De l'époux survivant { patron		_____
		ouvrier		_____
Du père (patron, ouvrier)		_____		
De la mère (patronne, ouvrière)		_____		
S'il s'agit d'un écolier	{	Est-il ?	interne	_____
			externe	_____
	{	Fréquente-t-il ?	un lycée	_____
			un collège	_____
			une école communale	_____
			une école libre	_____
Adresse de l'institution :				_____
Rue		n°		_____
Vacciné		non vacciné		_____

ENFANTS AU-DESSOUS DE 5 ANS.

État civil	{	Sexe du décédé		_____	
		Légitime	_____	illégitime	_____
		Reconnu	{ par le père	_____	
			{ par la mère	_____	
		Non reconnu		_____	
		Agé de		_____	
Né à		_____			
Département d		_____			
Date du décès ; le		du mois d		_____	
Demeure	{	Quartier		_____	
		Rue	_____	n°	_____
		étage.		_____	
		Salubre	_____	insalubre	_____

Enfant au-dessous de 2 ans nourri	{	Au sein .....
		Au biberon .....
		Par allaitement mixte .....
		Par la mère .....
		Dans la famille par une nourrice .....
		Hors de la famille .....
Résidence de l'enfant	{	Enfant gardé dans la famille .....
		La crèche .....
		La salle d'asile .....
		La garderie ou école enfantine .....
		Adresse de la résidence hors de la famille : Rue ..... n° .....
Etat du père ou de la mère	{	Profession { Du père (patron, ouvrier) .....
		De la mère (pat <sup>re</sup> , ouv <sup>re</sup> ) .....
		Age { Du père .....
		De la mère .....
		Degré de parenté { Oncle et nièce .....
Tante et neveu .....		
Cousins germains .....		
Issus de cousins germains .....		
Vacciné ..... non vacciné .....		
Le décédé était-il premier né ? * .....		

MORT-NÉS ET ENFANTS MORTS AVANT LA DÉCLARATION  
LE NAISSANCE.

Sexe .....

État civil : légitime ..... illégitime .....

Date de l'accouchement : le ..... du mois d .....

Demeure { Quartier .....

Rue ..... n° .....

..... étage.

Salubre ..... insalubre .....

Mode  
d'ac-  
cou-  
chem-  
ent { Naturel .....

Artificiel .....

Avec seigle ergoté .....

\* Ce renseignement ne doit être demandé que pour les enfants au-dessous d'un an.

Mère : primipare \_\_\_\_\_ pluripare \_\_\_\_\_

Lieu de l'accouchement { Dans le famille \_\_\_\_\_  
Chez une sage-femme \_\_\_\_\_  
Chez un médecin \_\_\_\_\_  
Autre : (Hôpital, prison,  
hôtel meublé, voie pub-  
lique, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Durée de la gestation \_\_\_\_\_

A respiré pendant \_\_\_\_\_

N'a pas respiré \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre d'en-  
fants déjà issus  
du ménage  
actuel { Garçon { Encore vivant \_\_\_\_\_  
Décédé \_\_\_\_\_  
Mort-né \_\_\_\_\_  
Fille { Encore vivante \_\_\_\_\_  
Décédée \_\_\_\_\_  
Mort-née \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre d'en-  
fants déjà issus  
de la mère au  
cours de mén-  
ages antérieurs { Garçon { Vivant \_\_\_\_\_  
Décédé \_\_\_\_\_  
Mort-né \_\_\_\_\_  
Fille { Vivante \_\_\_\_\_  
Décédée \_\_\_\_\_  
Mort-née \_\_\_\_\_

État du  
père et de  
la mère { Profession { Du père (patron, ouvrier) \_\_\_\_\_  
De la mère (pat<sup>ne</sup>, ouv<sup>re</sup>) \_\_\_\_\_  
Age { Du père \_\_\_\_\_  
De la mère \_\_\_\_\_

État du  
père et de  
la mère { Degré  
de { Oncle et nièce \_\_\_\_\_  
parenté { Tante et neveu \_\_\_\_\_  
Cousins germains \_\_\_\_\_  
Issus de cousins germains \_\_\_\_\_

Durée du mariage (en années) \_\_\_\_\_

Y a-t-il eu un { Nom et sexe \_\_\_\_\_  
accoucheur { Domieile \_\_\_\_\_

**Maladie cause de mort** \_\_\_\_\_

Correspondant au numéro \_\_\_\_\_ de la nomenclature (Voyez  
au verso).

Cette maladie a-t-elle été { aigue \_\_\_\_\_  
chronique \_\_\_\_\_

Accidents terminaux.....

V a-t-il eu opération chirurgicale?.....

Nom et domicile du médecin traitant.....

Le traitement a-t-il été effectué par le service des secours à domicile?.....

Fait à Paris, le ..... 18\_\_, à .....  
heure du .....

Cachet de la Mairie

*Le médecin de l'État civil,*

Vu :

*Le Maire du .....<sup>e</sup> arrondissement,*

The following schedule gives a very complete list of the various maladies or injuries among which the cause of death may in almost any case be found ; the number corresponding thereto is employed to denote it in the record, Form No. 3 :—

## NOMENCLATURE DES CAUSES DE DÉCÈS.

### MALADIES GÉNÉRALES.

#### N° 1.—MALADIES ÉPIDÉMIQUES.

1. Fièvre typhoïde.
2. Typhus.
3. Scorbut.
4. Variole.
5. Rougeole.
6. Scarlatine.
7. Coqueluche.
8. Diphtérie et croup.
9. Grippe.
10. Suette miliaire.
11. Choléra asiatique.
12. Choléra nostras.
13. Autres.



N<sup>o</sup> 2. —AUTRES MALADIES GÉNÉRALES.

14. Infection purulente et septicémie.
15. Morve.
16. Farcin.
17. Pustule maligne et charbon.
18. Rage.
19. Fièvre intermittente.
20. Cachexie palustre.
21. Pellagre.
22. Tuberculose {  
    *a.* des poumons.  
    *b.* des méninges.  
    *c.* du péritoine.  
    *d.* d'autres organes.  
    *e.* généralisée.
23. Scrofule.
24. Syphilis.
25. Cancer {  
    *a.* de la bouche.  
    *b.* de l'estomac, du foie.  
    *c.* des intestins, du rectum.  
    *d.* de l'utérus.  
    *e.* du sein.  
    *f.* de la peau.  
    *g.* autres.
26. Rhumatisme.
27. Goutte.
28. Diabète (sucre).
29. Goitre exophtalmique.
30. Maladie bronzée d'Addison.
31. Leucémie.
32. Anémie, chlorose.
33. Autres maladies générales.
34. Alcoolisme (aigu ou chronique).
35. Intoxications professionnelles.
36. Absorption de gaz délétères (suicide excepté).
37. Autres empoisonnements (suicide excepté).

## MALADIES LOCALES.

N° 3.—MALADIES DU SYSTÈME NERVEUX ET DES  
ORGANES DES SENS.

38. Encéphalite.
39. Méningite simple.
40. Ataxie locomotrice progressive.
41. Atrophie musculaire progressive.
42. Congestion et hémorrhagie cérébrales.
43. Ramollissement cérébral.
44. Paralysies sans cause indiquée.
45. Paralyse générale.
46. Autres formes de l'aliénation mentale.
47. Épilepsie.
48. Éclampsie (non puerpérale).
49. Convulsions des enfants.
50. Tétanos.
51. Chorée.
52. Autres maladies du système nerveux.
53. Maladies des yeux.
54. Maladies des oreilles.

## N° 4.—MALADIES DE L'APPAREIL CIRCULATOIRE.

55. Péricardite.
56. Endocardite.
57. Maladies organiques du cœur.
58. Angine de poitrine.
59. Affection des artères, athérome, gangrène sèche, anév-  
risme, etc.
60. Embolie.
61. Varices, ulcères variqueux, hémorroïdes.
62. Phlébite et autres affections des veines.
63. Lymphangite.
64. Autres affections du système lymphatique.
65. Hémorrhagies.
66. Autres affections de l'appareil circulaire.

## N° 5.—MALADIES DE L'APPAREIL RESPIRATOIRE.

67. Maladies des fosses nasales.
68. Affection du larynx ou du corps thyroïde.

69. Bronchite aiguë.
70. Bronchite chronique.
71. Broncho-pneumonie.
72. Pneumonie.
73. Pleurésie.
74. Congestion et apoplexie pulmonaires.
75. Gangrène du poumon.
76. Asthme.
77. Autres.

N° 6.—MALADIES DE L'APPAREIL DIGESTIF.

78. Affections de la bouche et de l'arrière-bouche.
79. Affections du pharynx et de l'œsophage.
80. { Affections de { Ulcère de l'estomac.
81. { l'estomac { Autres affections de l'estomac (cancer  
excepté).
82. {
83. { Affections de { Diarrhée infantile, athrepsie.
84. { l'intestin { Diarrhée et entérite.
85. { { Dysenterie.
86. { { Parasites intestinaux.
87. { { Hernies, obstructions intestinales.
88. { { Autres affections de l'intestin.
89. { Affections du { Ictère grave.
90. { foie { Tumeurs hydatiques.
91. { { Cirrhose.
92. { { Calculs biliaires.
93. { { Autres affections du foie.
93. Péritonite inflammatoire (puerpérale exceptée).
94. Autres affections de l'appareil digestif.
95. Phlegmon de la fosse iliaque.

N° 7.—MALADIES DE L'APPAREIL GÉNITO-URINAIRE ET DE  
SES ANNEXES.

96. Néphrite.
97. Maladie de Bright.
98. Périnéphrite et abcès périnéphrique.
99. Calculs rénaux.
100. Autres maladies des reins et annexes.
101. Calculs vésicaux.
102. Maladies de la vessie.
103. Maladies de l'urètre (abcès urineux, etc.).
104. Maladies de la prostate.

- 105. Maladies du testicule.
- 106. Métro-péritonite.
- 107. Absès du bassin.
- 108. Hématocèle péri-utérine.
- 109. } Maladies de { Métrite.
- 110. } l'utérus { Hémorrhagies (non puerpérales).
- 111. } { Tumeurs (non cancéreuses).
- 112. } { Autres maladies.
- 113. Kystes et autres tumeurs de l'ovaire.
- 114. Autres maladies des organes génitaux.
- 115. Maladies non puerpérales de la mamelle (cancer excepté).

#### N° 8.—AFFECTIONS PUERPÉRALES.

- 116. Accidents de la grossesse.
- 117. Hémorrhagie puerpérale.
- 118. Autres accidents de l'accouchement.
- 119. Septicémie puerpérale.
- 120. Métropéritonite puerpérale.
- 121. Éclampsie puerpérale.
- 122. Phlegmutia alba dolens puerpérale.
- 123. Autres accidents puerpéraux.—Mort subite.
- 124. Maladies de la mamelle puerpérales.

#### N° 9.—MALADIES DE LA PEAU ET DU TISSU CELLULAIRE.

- 125. Érysipèle.
- 126. Gangrène.
- 127. Anthrax.
- 128. Phlegmon, absès chaud.
- 129. Autres maladies de la peau et de ses annexes (cancer excepté).

#### N° 10.—MALADIES DES ORGANES DE LA LOCOMOTION.

- 130. Maladie de Pott.
- 131. Absès froid et par congestion.
- 132. Fractures.
- 133. Autres affections des os.
- 134. Luxations.
- 135. Tumeurs blanches.
- 136. Autres maladies des articulations.
- 137. Amputation.
- 138. Autres affections des organes de la locomotion.

N<sup>o</sup> 11.—NOUVEAU-NÉS DE 0 À 8 JOURS.

- 139. Débilité congénitale, ictère et sclérème.
- 140. Vices de conformation.
- 141. Défaut de soins.
- 142. Autres.

N<sup>o</sup> 12.—VIELLESSE.

- 143. Débilité sénile.

N<sup>o</sup> 13.—MORTS VIOLENTES.

- a.* Par le poison.
  - b.* Par asphyxie.
  - c.* Par strangulation.
  - d.* Par submersion.
- 144. Suicide {
  - e.* Par armes à feu.
  - f.* Par instruments tranchants.
  - g.* Par précipitation.
  - h.* Écrasement.
  - i.* Autres.
- 145. Traumatisme accidentel.
- 146. Brûlure.
- 147. Insolation et congélation.
- 148. Inanition.
- 149. Autres.

THE END.



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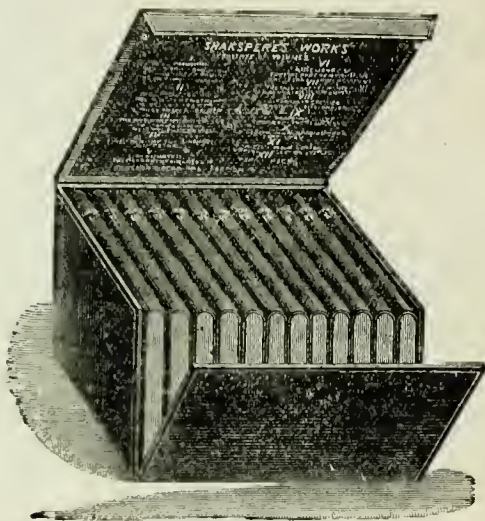


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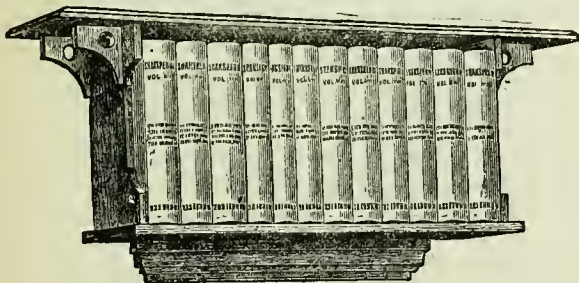
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4

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*Salar.* My wind, cooling my broth,  
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought  
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.  
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run  
But I should think of shallows and of flats,  
And see my wealthy Andrew, deck'd in sand,  
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs  
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church  
And see the holy edifice of stone,  
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,  
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,  
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,  
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,  
And, in a word, but even now worth this,  
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought  
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought  
That such a thing bechanc'd would make me sad?  
But tell not me: I know Antonio  
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

*Ant.* Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,  
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,  
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate  
Upon the fortune of this present year:  
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

*Salar.* Why, then you are in love.

*Ant.* Fie, fie!

*Salar.* Not in love neither? Then let us say you  
are sad,

Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy  
For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry,  
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed  
Janus,

Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time:  
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes  
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper;  
And other of such vinegar aspect

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